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SHAKESPEARE'S

CORIOLANUS

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THE TRAGEDY OF  
CORIOLANUS

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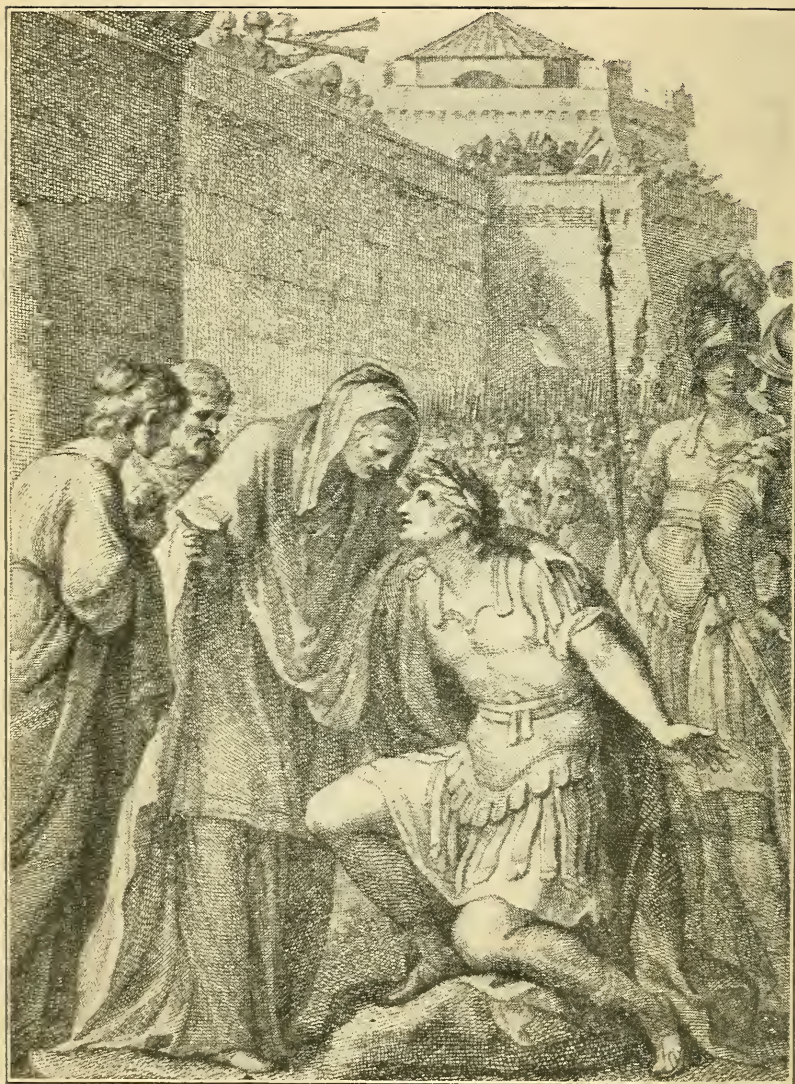
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You have, I know, petition'd all the gods  
For my prosperity !

THE TRAGEDY OF  
CORIOLANUS

BY  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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E.H.B.

## PREFATORY NOTE

*Coriolanus* presents especial difficulties to an editor because of the many obscure passages which it contains, and because of the various emendations which have been suggested by previous editors in the attempt to elucidate certain perplexing phrases. In this edition, the text is mainly that of the Temple, although other readings are frequently given in the Notes. Because this edition is intended primarily for the use of young students, the Notes have been made fuller and more interpretative than may seem necessary. For the same reason, other features that are commonly found in school editions are either omitted or treated very briefly.

The editor acknowledges his indebtedness to many noted editors, particularly to Rolfe, Dowden, Chambers, Hudson, and Wright; while for much valuable assistance in the labor of preparation, and for helpful criticism in the solving of doubtful problems, he is deeply indebted to his wife.

H. D. W.

CORNWALL-ON-HUDSON,  
June, 1918.



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## INTRODUCTION

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Birthplace.** — The quaint, interesting town of Stratford-on-Avon is inseparably associated with the name and fame of England's greatest dramatist, William Shakespeare. Situated in the beautiful county of Warwick about one hundred and twenty miles from London, it was in Shakespeare's day typical of the thriving market towns of the Tudor period, and had a population of about two thousand inhabitants. Since that time it has not grown rapidly, and has become a veritable Mecca for tourists in England, especially for literary students. For it was here that Shakespeare was born on April 26, 1564; here he spent the early years of his life; and here he returned to spend the closing years of his life, after he had become William Shakespeare, Gentleman. It was here also that he died on April 23, 1616, and was buried in the village church; and it is here that in recent years a Memorial Theater was erected to honor his memory.

**Parentage.** — His father, John Shakespeare, was one of Stratford's leading citizens and was

engaged at various times in farming, in making gloves, and in trading in leather, wool, meat, and all kinds of farm produce. He married Mary Arden, the daughter of a former employer, who brought him a handsome dowry consisting of an estate of sixty acres and the reversion of part of another. As he had already acquired two estates by purchase before his marriage, he had by this time come to be a man of considerable importance in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, — a fact which they recognized by electing him successively to the offices of ale-taster, burgess, constable, affeeror, chamberlain, and finally high bailiff. The last, the highest municipal office, he held when his son, William, was four years old and marks the zenith of his public career.

**Education.** — Neither John Shakespeare nor his wife had any education worth mentioning, but as Stratford boasted of a Free Grammar school, William was entered in this institution probably at the age of seven. In such schools, pupils studied Latin grammar, and read Latin works ranging from simple stories and fables to the works of such authors as the poets Ovid, Horace, and Virgil, the orator Cicero, and the playwrights Terence and Plautus, and Shakespeare here began his acquaintance with classic lore. It must not be supposed, however, that his wide knowledge of Roman history and of Roman character came

from these youthful studies, but rather that it was derived from his extensive reading in later years of translations of works in Latin and Greek with which Europe was flooded during the Renaissance.

In 1577, Shakespeare's father seems to have met with business reverses which forced him to sell some of his property and mortgage the estate which had been part of his wife's dowry. Owing to this and later ill-fortune, the son was withdrawn from school at the age of thirteen. Concerning his life during the next five years, we have no authentic information. One tradition tells us that he worked for his father, another that he was apprenticed to a butcher, and still another that he became a lawyer's clerk. There is some reason for accepting each one of these accounts; but nevertheless they seem to be based more upon conjecture than upon actual knowledge.

**Marriage.** — The first definite knowledge of William Shakespeare's doings after his school days is based on his marriage license, issued to him in 1582. His wife was Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a prosperous farmer of the neighboring village of Shottery. She was eight years his senior, and the marriage seems to have been rather hasty and not altogether a happy one. Three children were born to the couple, Susanna

in 1583, and Hamnet and Judith, twins, in 1585. The son, Hamnet, died in 1596 at the age of eleven, but the two daughters survived the poet, and both were married before his death, Susanna to Dr. Thomas Hall, and Judith to Thomas Quincy. The former is supposed to have been the original of Miranda in "The Tempest."

**Departure for London.** — In 1586, the future poet left Stratford on foot and went to London. The real reason for this step is not definitely known. According to an old tradition, he was caught poaching on the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, an irate landlord who owned the pretentious manor at Stratford called Charlecote Hall. Having lampooned the old squire afterwards in a satiric ballad, it is said that he found it desirable to leave the vicinity of Stratford and find an occupation elsewhere. As he was fond of outdoor sports, and also showed some signs of poetic genius even at this time, the tale is not improbable. Nevertheless, some of his biographers think it more likely that he went to London in search of work, as his family at this time numbered five persons, including himself. This seems the more probable when we observe that in London he at once became attached to the theaters.

**The Theaters in Shakespeare's Day.** — The theater was an institution that was growing

rapidly in popular favor in those days, and young Shakespeare was not altogether lacking in knowledge of it. He had undoubtedly seen performances of the miracle plays, the mystery plays, and the moralities, which were presented from time to time in the county of Warwickshire. Besides, traveling bands of actors came to Stratford occasionally, and at least one of these, the Earl of Leicester's Company, was entertained by Shakespeare's father during the time that he held the office of high bailiff. One of the men in this company, James Burbage, built a wooden building in 1576 just outside Bishopsgate, London, and called it "The Theater." Although it was only a crude structure, it was the first permanent London playhouse, and with it began English stage tradition. In the same year, the dismantled Blackfriars' monastery was remodeled to give the Queen's choir boys a place to play before the public, but as these were not professional actors, their work has less interest for us. Another theater, "The Curtain," was built a few months after "The Theater" and was fairly successful. At least six more were built during Shakespeare's lifetime, all of them outside of the city's walls because of a Puritan prejudice against the theatrical profession.

**Early Employment in London.** — Whether Shakespeare had any definite plans for his future

work, or whether he accidentally drifted into the theatrical profession, we have no means of knowing. However, we read in traditional accounts that he became a general servitor at a theater, holding horses of gentlemen, acting as call-boy, etc. His ability did not, however, permit him to remain in such menial occupations very long, and we soon find him as an actor taking minor parts, and later on as a reviser of plays that had been unsuccessful. Numerous plays called "The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare" are very likely plays which he rewrote or in the writing of which he collaborated with other playwrights. During his first six years in London, he revised at least half a dozen such plays.

**His Growing Reputation.** — Although his fame as an actor brought him to the notice of a limited circle, he first gained a reputation among the nobility by the publication in 1593 of a poem entitled *Venus and Adonis*. He followed this with a second poem in the following year, *The Rape of Lucrece*, which firmly established his reputation as a poet. Meanwhile, he had been writing original plays, the first of which, *Love's Labour's Lost*, had been produced several years earlier, and he continued to write and produce comedies, tragedies, and historical plays for a period of sixteen years. In all, some twenty-

eight plays came from his pen, but as they were not printed and, therefore, only known to those who saw them acted, they brought him less literary fame during his lifetime than the two poems already named. He wrote also a large number of beautiful sonnets which were not published until 1609, seven years before his death.

**Retirement.** — In 1612, after the production of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare carried out a plan that apparently he had formulated long before and settled down to live the life of a landed gentleman. He had made frequent visits to Stratford during his busy years in London, and in 1597 had bought New Place, the largest house in Stratford. Being of an economical nature, he had accumulated a considerable sum of money both by his acting and by the royalties from his plays, and now in sharp contrast to many of his contemporaries was a man of means who could spend the remaining years of his life in peace and comfort.

His income at one time, according to Sidney Lee's estimate, was at least six hundred pounds a year, a sum which would have had a purchasing power of at least twenty thousand dollars in our day. He was a large shareholder in the Globe Theater where most of his plays were acted, and had a small interest in the Blackfriars. At his death in 1616, his elder daughter, Mrs. Hall, received most of his possessions.

**His Plays.** — His plays are usually divided into four groups, each of which corresponds to a period in his life. His art developed as time went on, and there is naturally a great difference between the dramas of his youth and those of his maturer years. In the first period, we find him writing such plays as *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In the second period, we find his finest comedies, such as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor*, as well as several fine historical plays, *Henry V*, and *I Henry IV* and *II Henry IV*. In the third period, he dealt with problems of human destiny in such plays as *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the first four of which are among the best dramas ever written. In the final period, we find him in a less somber mood. Such plays as *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale* show how cheerful and serene his mind had become after years of meditation over the problems of evil and sin. For a fuller study of the poet's life and works, the student should consult one or more of the works listed in the Bibliography on page xlvi.



## THE DATE OF THE PLAY

Although the precise date of the composition of *Coriolanus* cannot be determined, nevertheless, scholars have agreed that it was written during the later years of Shakespeare's life, and undoubtedly was the third of his trilogy based upon Roman history. Attempts to define the date more accurately by external evidence, such as a supposed reference to the play in Jonson's *The Silent Woman*, the mulberry planting in 1609, and the dearth that prevailed in England in 1608-1609, are generally considered inconclusive. However, the internal evidence, such as the absence of rime, the numerous feminine and weak endings, the severity of the style, the infrequent use of humorous by-play, and similar features that characterize his later and more serious work, quite conclusively prove that this drama was written during his great tragic period. Modern editors have quite agreed that *Coriolanus* was written soon after *Antony and Cleopatra*, probably in the years 1608 to 1610.

It was first printed in the First Folio in 1623, and with slight changes in the text, was reprinted in the Second, Third, and Fourth Folios in 1632, 1664, and 1685, respectively.

## THE SOURCE OF THE PLOT

Shakespeare undoubtedly found the historical material for *Coriolanus* in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*. This work seems to have furnished him also with the material for *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and, to some extent, for *Timon of Athens*. First printed in 1579, it became so popular that no less than seven editions appeared between 1579 and 1676, — a fact which shows the reason for the great interest Shakespeare's audiences took in his plays on Roman history.

While Shakespeare closely followed Plutarch's biography of Coriolanus as far as the main incidents are concerned, he did not hesitate to alter certain minor ones nor to add others whenever dramatic technique demanded it. He compressed the story of the three revolts into one and changed the time of the one which was caused by a demand for free corn. He added scenes to delineate more fully the characters of Volumnia, Aufidius, etc., or, as in the battle scenes, to lend more realism to the action. Again, he omitted many details which Plutarch considered important, but which would have retarded the action. Among these are the embassy of priests that preceded Volumnia's "intercession

in Act V, the omens which fell when Rome received the news that Coriolanus was advancing against her with an army, the colonization of Velitres, and the forays against the Antiates. Many other variations between the two versions can be found by any diligent student.

On the other hand, the dramatist added various details that give a picturesque and dramatic touch to the story, and he gave greater individuality and vitality to the minor characters of the play than Plutarch did. Examples of the former are the humorous repartee between Menenius and the tribunes in Act I, Scene i, and that between Menenius and the sentinels in Act V, Scene ii; the wager of a horse in Act I, Scene iv; the reply of Aufidius in Act IV, Scene v; while the latter is exemplified throughout the play in the masterly delineation of Volumnia, Menenius, Virgilia, and the tribunes.

In some parts of the play, Shakespeare has followed North's translation so closely that the speeches of the characters appear to be a poetical paraphrase of the splendid prose of the original. Examples may be found in Act V, Scene iii, ll. 94-98, or in Act I, Scene iv, ll. 55-60. The fable of the belly, as it is related by Menenius in the play differs in minor respects from the version given in North's *Plutarch*. This has led to the belief that Shakespeare may also have

had before him a version of the fable that appeared in 1605 in Camden's *Remaines*. The legend itself is an ancient and widely-circulated one and appears in the writings of the Greeks and Egyptians as well as in those of the Romans.

### THE SUBJECT MATTER OF CORIOLANUS

In studying *Coriolanus*, we find two subjects of absorbing interest: first, the political struggle between the patrician and the plebeian classes in ancient Rome, and secondly, the struggle within Coriolanus himself against his haughty self-pride and his passionate prejudice against the lower classes. Of these, the second is the more important and the first only serves as a background. We are not to suppose that Shakespeare was writing an historical play, nor that he was, as some critics, notably Hazlitt, have declared, giving a final verdict upon the social and political struggle that took place in early Roman days. On the contrary, he merely went to Plutarch's *Lives* a third time to obtain material for a drama in which he could present the ruin of a noble man through the sin of egotism and pride. The primary interest of the play is not centered in the contest for municipal rights, but in the inevitable fate that overtakes one who acts as if he were a god and not a mere mortal.

It is never well to consider that Shakespeare was at any time attempting to point a moral or to express an opinion on the merits of any movement or any cause. Hardly any author was more self-effacing in his work, and we can rarely feel certain that he is stepping out of the background to make a character a mouthpiece for his personal opinions. If he can be considered as a critic of political questions at all, we must seek his views on these in his earlier plays on English history; for at the time he wrote *Coriolanus*, he was confining himself to a profound study of human life and character, to the solution of the deeper problems of our destiny. *Macbeth*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* had been written by this time, all somber tragedies with a political background, but with our attention focused on the deterioration in the leading characters who have committed wrongs. His general method of treatment has been well stated by Bradley, whom Professor Matthews quotes in his admirable work, *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, and it deserves quoting here: "When Shakespeare moved to put forth his full powers as playwright and as poet, as psychologist and as philosopher, he sets before us a tale of suffering and calamity conducting to the death of the hero, who is always a conspicuous person, prominent in the state. The

part of the hero's career which is shown in action on the stage is that which immediately precedes his death, he having been introduced to us at first in a fairly happy condition, and the later calamity and sufferings are unexpected, exceptional, and striking. As a whole, the tragedy brings home to us an abiding sense of the powerlessness of man and it makes us feel that the fatal end follows inevitably and inexorably from the deeds of men, and that the main source of these deeds is character. The hero, who is always of heroic size, is destroyed by his own failing, which is his ruling quality, at once his strength and his weakness. He is not the victim of the merely external forces against which he struggles in vain, rather he is betrayed by himself. He goes down because he is what he is. And, as a result, his downfall and his death may be pitiful but they are not painful. We understand the reasons and we are reconciled to the result. The spectacle of the hero's self-destruction is not depressing, since there is nothing petty in it and nothing accidental."

This is precisely the method Shakespeare used in writing *Coriolanus*. Plutarch furnished him with incidents, traits, hints, etc., which by his vitalizing imagination, Shakespeare combined into a powerful drama. The story is largely a legendary one, and even as Plutarch relates it, full of

incongruities. But even so, it contained elements which, in the hands of a man who had such remarkably clear insight into problems of character and such a complete command of the resources of dramatic art, could be converted into an absorbing play.

In writing *Coriolanus*, the dramatist followed the original version in North's *Plutarch* more closely than he did in his other Roman plays. Nevertheless, in adapting the legend to dramatic purposes, he pruned it considerably and retained the essential ideas of the story rather than the literal facts. As historians are not in agreement as to how much can be accepted as fact, nor even as to the exact names of the characters, young students may concern themselves little with this divergence, but should study the political situation as Shakespeare presents it to us. The only historical fact referred to which is authentic is the secession of the plebeians to Mons Sacer in 495 B.C. because of agricultural distress and usury, a secession which was followed by the election of the tribunes.

Rome at the time of Coriolanus was split up into two contending factions, the patricians and the plebeians. The former had become rich and powerful and considered themselves "the city." They led luxurious lives and looked upon their prosperity as their natural due. All the civil

power of the state was in their hands and they exercised it in an autocratic manner for their own benefit. Their chief occupation was war, and prowess in battle was regarded as the highest of all mortal attainments. Whenever their power became endangered by any popular clamor for a more just division of the fruits of labor, they either provoked a war or welcomed one begun by some hostile neighbor in order to divert attention from such domestic problems. The warrior was idolized, and his deeds extolled and rehearsed on every suitable occasion. As has been the custom in all militaristic nations, the young men were trained to be soldiers from their childhood, and a contempt was engendered in them for all those who had not been trained and disciplined in a like manner.

The plebeians, on the other hand, were the tradesmen, the craftsmen, etc., who comprised the majority of the inhabitants of the city. Eventually becoming tired of continual wars, of heavy levies, of usury, and of a lack of corn, they seceded from the city. Instead of giving them redress from their wrongs, the patricians appeased them by the appointment of certain magistrates, called tribunes, who were to safeguard their rights. By this apparent concession, the patricians felt they could still the popular clamor, and, although granting to the commoners



*SUBJECT MATTER OF CORIOLANUS* xxvii

a semblance of power, really retain the actual power for themselves. Many of the nobles, among whom Coriolanus was a leader, strongly opposed such a compromise and insisted that such a policy formed a dangerous precedent which would be "the seed of political anarchy and dissolution." Others, however, of whom Cominius is an example, were more moderate and foresaw that the populace was too powerful to be successfully opposed in all things. Yet when Coriolanus is finally banished, they have no reply to his taunts when he declares that they have lost their power to the crafty tribunes whom they created.

Even as Shakespeare has portrayed the good and bad qualities of the patricians, so does he show us the good and bad qualities among the plebeians. The latter are ready and willing to reward Coriolanus for his brave deeds with the highest office of the state, but they realize that he scorns to accept anything which they have power to bestow and "pays himself with being proud." They are not so blind that they cannot see that his valiant deeds are done not so much for the glory of Rome as to feed his unlimited pride and to prove the superior virtues of the patrician class. At no time does he lose an opportunity to show his contempt for them. He despises them in battle, he calls them "a common

cry of curs," and even while he begs their votes, he does it more as a command than as a request. Yet even when they might have him executed, they modify the sentence to banishment.

On the whole, the plebeians appear, however, in an unfavorable light. Neither they nor their leaders arouse our admiration. In political affairs, they are fickle and irrational, easily led by the crafty tribunes. They are made to appear dirty and unkempt, greedy and ungrateful. Throughout his Roman plays, the dramatist usually presents the people as a mob without opinions, except such as a clever demagogue can inject into them. Still, in spite of the same sweaty caps and stinking breaths, the people in *Coriolanus* are less disreputable and less fickle than the rabble in *Julius Cæsar*. Their position in this conflict is correctly stated in the conversation between the two officers at the beginning of the second scene of Act II.

If we would assume that Shakespeare in any way expressed an opinion in this play on the rights of democracy *vs.* aristocracy, we must remember what the conditions of the lower classes were in his day. England had been well-governed under the wise rule of Elizabeth and was still fairly prosperous under James I. However, during the entire Tudor period, the social structure of England had been in a ferment. The

Wars of the Roses had left the nobles in an impoverished state and much of the largess formerly given by them to the poor had ceased. Soon after Elizabeth's reign began, wars temporarily ceased too, and as a result, a multitude of ex-soldiers, idle, profligate, and unwilling to work, descended upon the towns of England, especially London, and demanded support gratis. London became so filled with shiftless people that laws were passed making any person without visible means of support a vagabond and subjecting him to severe punishment. Some of them roved from town to town in groups of a hundred or more, stealing, carousing, and terrifying the people. Undoubtedly, many were among the "understanders" in the pits of the theaters where they demanded buffoonery rather than serious drama, horse-play rather than poetry. It is to these that Shakespeare refers in *Hamlet* when he says that they are "fit only for dumb shows and noise." And as his lower classes are always English because *local color* was unknown by the writers of his day, is it not surprising that he should be so moderate in his treatment of them when he had evidences every day of their ingratitude, their lack of perception, their tractableness?

In fact, what he did seem to condemn was "the violence and irrationality of untrained men," and not the men themselves. Coriolanus is found

wanting and suffers death; the plebeians put Rome in danger by their irrational act. The curse of the world then is inefficiency and fickleness. The poet does not condemn the common people merely because they are common, nor is he, on the other hand, any democratic sentimentalist. If he seems inclined to favor the rule of the aristocracy, he does so only when the aristocracy lives up to its possibilities. The word "aristocracy" literally means, "the rule by the best" or by those who because of real merit are deserving of power.

That this was a natural conclusion for him to arrive at is apparent when we remember his own experience. He himself became a man of means because he was industrious and frugal, and because of his prosperity and growing fame, became the envy of many minor playwrights. While many of these, some of them university men, were decrying the public taste or else catering to its lowest demands and thereby hastening the Puritan agitation against the theater, he was profitably producing plays that were not only well-received but were educating the public taste, enlightening the people about the past history of their country, and enlarging their views of life. He, therefore, had scant sympathy with the inefficient.

## CRITICAL COMMENT

*Coriolanus*

“ Coriolanus himself stands out, in Shakespeare, yet more than in Plutarch, as a giant among pigmies. He has the surpassing excellencies of the true aristocrat and seems to embody at once the aristocratic ideals of heroic Greece and of feudal chivalry. He scorns money and pain; he has a natural eloquence always at command, and everything he says is impressed with an indefinable greatness. Less ‘churlish and solitary’ than in Plutarch, for Shakespeare gives him the adoring friendship of Menenius and Cominius, he is at bottom more ‘uncivil,’ less fit for citizenship, more impracticable in his passionate self-will. This aspect of his character Shakespeare has emphasized with a series of admirably imagined strokes. It is only in the drama that Coriolanus revolts against the traditional ceremony of displaying his wounds, and declaims, with the naïve unreason of a head-strong nature, against the authority of ‘custom,’ on which his own patrician privilege ultimately rested. His vengeance is far more sweeping and uncompromising. He comes to burn Rome, not to get reasonable concessions for his allies; far from ‘keeping the noblemen’s lands and goods

safe from harm and burning,' he sternly dismisses the appeal of his noble friends for discrimination; he cannot stay to pick a few grains of wheat in a pile

. 'Of noisome musty chaff.'

Political partisanship is effaced in the fury of personal vengeance."

HERFORD: *The Eversley Shakespeare.*

"A haughty passionate feeling, a superb egotism, are with Coriolanus the sources of weakness and of strength. . . . The pride of Coriolanus is not that which comes from self-surrender to and union with some power or person or principle higher than one's self. It is twofold — a passionate esteem which is essentially egoistic, and, secondly, a passionate prejudice of class. His nature is the reverse of cold and selfish; his sympathies are warm, deep, and generous; but a line, hard and fast, has been drawn for him by the aristocratic tradition, and it is only within that line that he permits his sympathies to play. To the surprise of the tribunes, he can accept, well pleased, a subordinate command under Cominius. He yields with kindly condescension to accept the devotion and fidelity of Menenius, and cherishes towards the old man a filial regard — the feeling of a son

who has the consciousness that he is greater than his father. He must dismiss Menenius disappointed from the Volscian camp; but he contrives an innocent fraud by means of which the old senator will fancy that he has effected more for the peace of Rome than another could. For Virgilia, the gentle woman in whom his heart finds rest, Coriolanus has a manly tenderness and constant freshness of adhesion:

“ ‘ O, a kiss  
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!  
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss  
I carried it from thee, dear; and my true lip  
Hath virgin'd it e'er since!’ ”

“. . . The weakness, the inconstancy, and the incapacity of apprehending facts which are the vices of the people, reflect and repeat themselves in the great patrician; his aristocratic vices counterbalance their plebeian. He is rigid and obstinate; but under the influence of an angry egoism he can renounce his principles, his party, and his native city. He will not bear away to his private use the paltry booty of the Volscies; but to obtain the consulship he is urged by his proud mother and his patrician friends to stand bareheaded before the mob, to expose his wounds, to sue for their votes, to give his heart the lie, to bend the knee like a beggar asking an alms.

The judgment and the blood are ill commingled; he desires the end, but can only half submit to the means which are necessary to obtain that end; he has not sufficient self-control to enable him to dispose of those chances of which he is lord. And so he mars his fortune. The pride of Coriolanus, as Mr. Hudson has observed, is 'rendered altogether inflammable and uncontrollable by passion; insomuch that if a spark of provocation is struck into the latter, the former instantly flames up beyond measure, and sweeps away all the regards of prudence, decorum, and even of common sense.' Now, such passion as this Shakespeare knew to be weakness, and not strength; and by this uncontrollable violence of temper Coriolanus draws down upon himself his banishment from Rome and his subsequent fate."

DOWDEN: *Shakespeare.*

### *Menenius*

"The most striking personage next to Coriolanus is Menenius Agrippa. . . . He has none of Coriolanus' thirst for fame; he rather rejoices in the fame of his friend; he idolizes him and 'it gives him an estate of seven years' health' when Coriolanus condescends to write to him. He calls himself 'the book of his good acts,



whence men have read his fame unparalleled, haply amplified.' Even with the will to speak the truth of his hero he involuntarily oversteps its bounds. It is easy to him to be his unselfish admirer because his own talents lie in quite another direction. Age has broken his warlike strength, though his brave mind still looks out here and there, when in extremity he calls the nobles to help Coriolanus, and says he could himself 'take up a brace of the best of the plebeians.' But his true strength lies rather in mental superiority; his excellence is that of a clever orator. Shakespeare has given him the propitiatory office of a mediator, in contrast to Coriolanus' blunt party spirit, but he has wisely avoided giving him any power to act, because that would have thrown Coriolanus too much in the shade. Instead of energy and wisdom, he has given him zeal, and the experience belonging to age, figurative oratory, and prudent, wholesome sense; his wit and skill in persuasion he mostly uses with those who have none of their own. He is as expert in the office of mediator as Coriolanus is inexpert. Instead of making lofty pretensions, he has a respect for human weakness; compared with that overstrained nature he is indolent and easy, and where the other is rigid and unbending, Menenius is yielding, good-humored, sociable, and friendly; instead of

gloomy seriousness, he indulges in a broad, pleasant humor. He is a good sleeper, he likes his wine unmixed; behind his back they say of him that he is 'something imperfect in favouring the first complaint.' There is not in him a vein of Coriolanus' pride, but only a little conceit in his gift of speaking, which seldom fails to succeed with the people, and which, in a case of extreme difficulty, he hopes to turn to good account with Coriolanus; and his vanity feels itself wounded when the shallow tribunes think they 'know' him because he is open and honest. If his pride is little compared to the haughtiness of Coriolanus, Menenius' passionateness is in the same proportion. He can be hasty, and rage out with the good nature of choleric old age and on trifling occasions; but in great matters, where Coriolanus loses his temper, he is patient, calm, full of the greatest discretion, and perfectly master of himself."

GERVINUS: *Shakespeare Commentaries*.

### THE STAGE HISTORY OF THE PLAY

Practically nothing is known of the stage production of *Coriolanus* in Shakespeare's time nor in the period immediately following his death. The first mention of it in English stage history appears in a remodeled version by Nahum Tate,

entitled *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or The Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus*. Tate admitted his indebtedness to Shakespeare upon whose work he attempted to improve by adding to the last act such crude horrors as the suicide of Virgilia, the killing of Aufidius, a mad scene for Volumnia, the murder of Menenius, and the torture of young Martius. Tate produced the play at the Theater Royal in 1682 with the avowed purpose of teaching the public a lesson in submission to established authority, but it was not very well received.

The next English adaptation of which we have a record was the unsuccessful version of John Dennis, entitled *The Invader of His Country, or The Fatal Resentment*. This play, in which Booth played the leading rôle, was produced at the Drury Lane Theater, London, but was withdrawn after a few performances. The play had very little merit as Dennis had "outrageously mangled Shakespeare" in his efforts to improve upon him, but the author blamed the actors for its failure with the public.

Thomson, the author of *The Seasons*, also wrote a tragedy on the same story which was produced after his death in 1749 at the Covent Garden Theater. For this play, the author obtained his material not from Plutarch but from the historians, Livy and Dionysius of Halicar-

nassus. It was withdrawn after ten performances, as it made but a small appeal even to audiences accustomed to long, pompous passages of wearisome declamation which formed a large part of it.

In 1789, however, a notable series of productions of a different version, consisting partly of Thomson's work but mostly of Shakespeare's, was presented at the Drury Lane Theater with Kemble as Coriolanus and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, as Volumnia. Kemble repeatedly revived the play and used it for his farewell appearance on the stage in 1817. Noted men of letters, as Scott, Lamb, and Hazlitt, have given us lavish praise of these representations.

Edmund Kean and William Macready also essayed presentations of the play with the original text of the play, but neither added much to his reputation by doing so. Of the two, Macready was the more successful and played the part on numerous occasions. Edwin Forrest scored a notable success in America in his productions of the play in 1828 and the years following, while Edwin Booth, John McCullough, and Lawrence Barrett appeared in it at various times.

In 1901, Sir Henry Irving, after a long period of preparation, attempted an elaborate revival, but his impersonation of the hero was rather unsatisfactory. Aside from this unsuccessful attempt at

revival, no important production of the play has been given in the present generation.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE VERSE

Like Shakespeare's other plays, *Coriolanus* is written partly in prose and partly in verse. The number of lines which are rimed is considerably less than in his earlier plays, as he seemed to prefer to use blank verse almost exclusively toward the end of his dramatic career.

Shakespeare seems to have composed his lines less by rules of meter and more by ear. Consequently, the student should read the verse aloud before attempting to scan it, for he will then realize the need for some short lines consisting of but one or two metrical feet and for the pauses that occur from time to time when the thought ends at or near the middle of a poetic line.

The verse generally employed by Shakespeare in his dramas consists of ten-syllable lines, the even syllables of which are stressed. Such lines are said to be written in iambic pentameter. The following is an example :

“Against | the wind | a mile! | You souls | of  
geese.” | — Act I, Sc. iv, l. 54.

Variations from this form are, however, very common, and in the case of some lines, even

cultivated readers are not in entire agreement as to the correct scansion. Some of our difficulties in this respect are doubtless due to the different way in which Elizabethans accented certain words, a few of which are referred to in the Notes. Most of them, however, have little interest for the average student, and a detailed analysis of them would only detract from the enjoyment of the more important features of the play.

A few of these variations are: (a) the use of a spondee; *e.g.*

“*Áll húr* | behind; | *bácks réd*, | and *fá|ces pále.*” |  
— Act I, Sc. iv, l. 57.

(b) The use of a trochee; *e.g.*

“*Lóng as* | my *éx|ile*, *sweet* | as *mý* | *revenge.*” | —  
Act V, Sc. iii, l. 54.

(c) The use of an anapest; *e.g.*

“*I was forcé* | to *scó*d. | Your *judg|ments*, *mý* |  
*grave lord*s.” | — Act V, Sc. vi, l. 135.

(d) The addition of an extra unstressed syllable, producing what is termed a feminine ending; *e.g.*

“Hear you | this Tri|ton of | the min|nows?

Mark (*you*)

His ab|solute shall?” — Act III, Sc. i, ll. 130-131.

For a fuller discussion of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's verse, the student should consult Gummere's "Book of Verse" or Mayor's "Chapters on English Metre."

**Prose** is used largely for comedy, such as the scenes in which Menenius appears; in simple conversation pertaining to domestic life such as the conversation between the three women in Act I, Scene iii; and, in general, in scenes of "low life," such as the scene in the kitchen in Act IV in which the servingmen are conversing. However, it must be observed that when a character who speaks in prose becomes emotional, he invariably breaks into blank verse. As an example, note how Marcius turns from prose to poetry in Act II, Scene iii.

### SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH

In reading any of Shakespeare's plays, the student must bear in mind the fact that the language of the Elizabethans was not as fixed and as standardized as ours is to-day. The spelling of words was full of variations, even proper

names showing numerous differences. Besides, words were not always accented on the same syllable, words which we consider necessary were often omitted, and inflections of certain words now rarely used, but common in Old English, were retained. Some of these differences between Shakespeare's English and our modern speech have been referred to in the Notes, but a student who wishes to study them more fully should consult Abbott's *Shakesperian Grammar*. The student beginning the study of Shakespeare need not attempt to master all the intricate details of this subject, but may rest content with a knowledge of the more common differences such as :

(a) The use of one part of speech for another, usually the adjective as an adverb or the noun used as a verb; *e.g.*

“Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going  
About their functions *friendly*.” — IV, vi, 10.

“Who . . . *bonneted*, without any further deed to  
have them at all into their estimation and report.” —  
II, ii, 29–32.

(b) The omission of words because of the desire for brevity. The ellipsis may be the omission of *to* before the infinitive, or even of the infinitive itself; it may be the omission of the pronoun, especially the relative; it may be the omission



of the verb, usually when the verb denotes motion; or it may be the still more common omission of the preposition. The following are examples of each of these:

“I will go wash.” — I, ix, 83.

“What, art thou stiff? *stand'st* out?” — I, i, 307.

“I *will not* out of doors.” — I, iii, 81.

“While she *chats* him.” — II, i, 243.

(c) Inflections of various parts of speech are often misused and frequently not used at all. Personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and adjectives should be carefully watched to detect these variations from modern usage. Besides, examples of the double comparative, which are easily detected, occur frequently.

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CORIOLANUS

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CAIUS MARCIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.

TITUS LARTIUS, }  
COMINIUS, } generals against the Volscians.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus.

SICINIUS VELUTUS, }  
JUNIUS BRUTUS, } tribunes of the people.

YOUNG MARCIUS, son of Coriolanus.

A Roman Herald.

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, general of the Volscians.

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus.

VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus.

VALERIA, friend to Virgilia.

Gentlewoman attending on Virgilia.

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *Rome and the neighbourhood; Corioli and the neighbourhood; Antium.*

# THE TRAGEDY OF CORIOLANUS



## ACT FIRST. — SCENE I

*Rome. A street.*

*Enter a company of mutinous CITIZENS, with staves, clubs, and other weapons.*

*First Cit.* Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

*All.* Speak, speak.

*First Cit.* You are all resolved rather to die than to famish? 5

*All.* Resolved, resolved.

*First Cit.* First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy<sup>o</sup> to the people.

*All.* We know't, we know't.

*First Cit.* Let us kill him, and we'll have corn<sup>o</sup> 10  
at our own price. Is't a verdict?

*All.* No more talking on't; let it be done:  
away, away!

*Sec. Cit.* One word, good citizens.

15 *First Cit.* We are accounted poor citizens; the  
patricians, good.° What authority° surfeits on  
would relieve us: if they would yield us but the  
superfluity while it were wholesome, we might  
guess they relieved us humanely; but they think  
20 we are too dear: the leanness that afflicts us,  
the object° of our misery, is as an inventory to  
particularize° their abundance; our sufferance°  
is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our  
pikes,° ere we become rakes: for the gods know  
25 I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst  
for revenge.

*Sec. Cit.*° Would you proceed especially against  
Caius Marcius?

*All.* Against him first; he's a very dog° to  
30 the commonalty.°

*Sec. Cit.* Consider you what services he has  
done for his country?

*First Cit.* Very well; and could be content  
to give him good report° for't, but that he pays  
35 himself with being proud.



*Sec. Cit.* Nay, but speak not maliciously.

*First Cit.* I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother<sup>o</sup> and <sup>40</sup> to be partly<sup>o</sup> proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.<sup>o</sup>

*Sec. Cit.* What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.<sup>o</sup> 45

*First Cit.* If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition.<sup>o</sup> [*Shouts within.*] What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen: why stay we prating here? to the Capitol<sup>o</sup>! 50

*All.* Come, come.

*First Cit.* Soft! who comes here?

*Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA.*

*Sec. Cit.* Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people.<sup>o</sup>

*First Cit.* He's one honest enough: would all <sup>55</sup> the rest were so! \_

*Men.* What work's, my countrymen, in hand?  
where go you

With bats<sup>o</sup> and clubs? the matter? speak, I pray  
65 you.

*First Cit.* Our business is not unknown to the  
senate; they have had inkling, this fortnight,  
what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em  
in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong  
65 breaths<sup>o</sup>; they shall know we have strong arms  
too.

*Men.* Why, masters, my good friends, mine  
honest neighbours,

Will you undo yourselves?

70 *First Cit.* We cannot, sir, we are undone  
already.

*Men.* I tell you, friends, most charitable care  
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,  
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well  
75 Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them  
Against the Roman state; whose course will on  
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs  
Of more strong link asunder than can ever  
Appear in your impediment.<sup>o</sup> For the dearth,  
80 The gods, not the patricians, make it, and

Your knees<sup>o</sup> to them, not arms, must help.  
Alack,

You are transported by calamity  
Thither where more attends you,<sup>o</sup> and you slander  
The helms<sup>o</sup> o' the state, who care for you like 85  
fathers,

When you curse them as enemies.

*First Cit.* Care for us! True, indeed! They  
ne'er cared for us yet: suffer us to famish, and  
their store-houses crammed with grain; make 90  
edicts for usury, to support usurers<sup>o</sup>; repeal daily  
any wholesome act established against the rich,  
and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain  
up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not  
up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us. 95

*Men.* Either you must  
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,  
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you  
A pretty tale: it may be you have heard it;  
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture 100  
To stale't a little more.<sup>o</sup>

*First Cit.* Well, I'll hear it, sir: yet you must  
not think to fob off<sup>o</sup> our disgrace with a tale: but,  
an't please you, deliver.

105 *Men.* There was a time when all the body's  
members

Rebell'd against the belly; thus accused it:  
That only like a gulf it did remain

I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,  
110 Still cupboarding the viand,<sup>o</sup> never bearing  
Like labour with the rest; where<sup>o</sup> the other in-  
struments

Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,  
And, mutually participate,<sup>o</sup> did minister  
115 Unto the appetite and affection<sup>o</sup> common  
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd —

*First Cit.* Well, sir, what answer made the  
belly<sup>o</sup>?

*Men.* Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of  
120 smile,  
Which ne'er came from the lungs,<sup>o</sup> but even  
thus —

For, look you,<sup>o</sup> I may make the belly smile  
As well as speak — it tauntingly replied  
125 To the discontented members, the mutinous parts  
That envied his receipt; even so most fitly  
As you malign our senators for that  
They are not such as you.

*First Cit.*° Your belly's answer? What!  
 The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye, 130  
 The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,  
 Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,  
 With other muniments° and petty helps  
 In this our fabric, if that they —

*Men.* What then? 135  
 'Fore me,° this fellow speaks! what then? what  
 then?

*First Cit.* Should by the cormorant belly be  
 restrain'd,  
 Who is the sink o' the body, — 140

*Men.* Well, what then?

*First Cit.* The former agents, if they did  
 complain,  
 What could the belly answer?

*Men.* I will tell you; 145  
 If you'll bestow a small — of what you have  
 little —

Patience awhile, you'st° hear the belly's answer.

*First Cit.* You're long about it.

*Men.* Note me° this, good friend; 150  
 Your most grave belly was deliberate,  
 Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd:

‘True is it, my incorporate<sup>o</sup> friends,’ quoth he,  
 ‘That I receive the general food at first,  
 155 Which you do live upon; and fit it is,  
 Because I am the store-house and the shop  
 Of the whole body: but, if you do remember,  
 I send it through the rivers of your blood,  
 Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o’ the  
 160 brain<sup>o</sup>;

And, through the cranks and offices<sup>o</sup> of man,  
 The strongest nerves<sup>o</sup> and small inferior veins  
 From me receive that natural competency  
 Whereby they live: and though that all at once,  
 165 You, my good friends,’—this says the belly,  
 mark me, —

*First Cit.* Ay, sir; well, well.

*Men.* ‘Though all at once cannot  
 See what I do deliver out to each,  
 170 Yet I can make my audit up, that all  
 From me do back receive the flour<sup>o</sup> of all,  
 And leave me but the bran.’ What say you to’t?

*First Cit.* It was an answer: how apply you  
 this?

175 *Men.* The senators of Rome are this good  
 belly,

And you the mutinous members: for examine  
 Their counsels and their cares, digest things  
 rightly

Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find 180  
 No public benefit which you receive

But it proceeds or comes from them to you  
 And no way from yourselves. What do you  
 think,

You, the great toe° of this assembly? 185

*First Cit.* I the great toe! why the great toe?

*Men.* For that, being one o' the lowest, basest,  
 poorest,

Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost:  
 Thou rascal,° that art worst in blood to run, 190  
 Lead'st first to win some vantage.

But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs:  
 Rome and her rats are at the point of battle;  
 The one side must have bale.°

*Enter CAIUS MARCIUS.*

Hail, noble Marcius! 195

*Mar.* Thanks. What's the matter, you dis-  
 sentious rogues,

That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,  
 Make yourselves scabs<sup>o</sup>?

200 *First Cit.*      We have ever your good word.

*Mar.*    He that will give good words to thee will  
           flatter

Beneath abhorring.    What would you have, you  
           curs,

205 That like nor peace nor war? the one affrights  
           you,

The other makes you proud.    He that trusts to  
           you,

Where he should find you lions, finds you hares,

210 Where foxes, geese: you are no surer,<sup>o</sup> no,

Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,

Or hailstone in the sun.    Your virtue is<sup>o</sup>

To make him worthy whose offence subdues him

And curse that justice did it.    Who deserves

215            greatness

Deserves your hate; and your affections<sup>o</sup> are

A sick man's appetite, who desires most that

Which would increase his evil.    He that depends

Upon your favours swims with fins of lead

220 And hews down the oaks with rushes.    Hang ye!

Trust ye?



With every minute you do change a mind,  
And call him noble that was now your hate,  
Him vile that was your garland.° What's the  
matter, 225

That in these several places of the city  
You cry against the noble senate, who,  
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else  
Would feed on one another? What's their seek-  
ing°? 230

*Men.* For corn at their own rates; whereof,  
they say,  
The city is well stored.

*Mar.* Hang 'em! They say!  
They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know 235  
What's done i' the Capitol; who's like to  
rise,

Who thrives and who declines; side° factions and  
give out  
Conjectural marriages; making parties strong, 240  
And feebling° such as stand not in their liking  
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's  
grain enough!

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,°  
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry° 245

With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high  
As I could pick° my lance.

*Men.* Nay, these are almost thoroughly per-  
suaded°;

250 For though abundantly they lack discretion,  
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech  
you,

What says the other troop?

*Mar.* They are dissolved: hang 'em!

255 They said they were an-hungry; sigh'd forth  
proverbs,°

That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,  
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods  
sent not

260 Corn for the rich men only: with these shreds  
They vented their complainings; which being  
answer'd,

And a petition granted them, a strange one —  
To break the heart of generosity°

265 And make bold power look pale — they threw  
their caps°

As they would hang them on the horns o' the  
moon,

Shouting their emulation.°

*Men.* What is granted them? 270

*Mar.* Five tribunes to defend their vulgar  
wisdoms,  
Of their own choice: one's Junius Brutus,  
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not — 'Sdeath°!  
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city, 275  
Ere so prevail'd with me: it will in time  
Win upon power° and throw forth greater themes  
For insurrection's arguing.

*Men.* This is strange.

*Mar.* Go get you home, you fragments! 280

*Enter a MESSENGER, hastily.*

*Mess.* Where's Caius Marcius?

*Mar.* Here: what's the matter?

*Mess.* The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

*Mar.* I am glad on't: then we shall ha' means  
to vent 285

Our musty superfluity.° See, our best elders.

*Enter COMINIUS, TITUS 'LARTIUS, and other  
SENATORS; JUNIUS BRUTUS and SICINIUS  
VELUTUS.*



*Men.* O, true-bred!

*First Sen.* Your company to the Capitol;  
where, I know,  
Our greatest friends attend us.

*Tit.* [To *Com.*] Lead you on.<sup>o</sup> 315

[To *Mar.*] Follow Cominius; we must follow  
you;

Right worthy you priority.

*Com.* Noble Marcius<sup>o</sup>!

*First Sen.* [To the *Citizens*] Hence to your 320  
home, be gone!

*Mar.* Nay, let them follow:  
The Volsces have much corn; take these rats  
thither

To gnaw their garners. Worshipful mutiners, 325  
Your valour puts well forth<sup>o</sup>: pray, follow.

[*Citizens steal away. Exeunt all  
but Sicinius and Brutus.*]

*Sic.* Was ever man so proud as is this Mar-  
cius?

*Bru.* He has no equal.

*Sic.* When we were chosen tribunes<sup>o</sup> for the 330  
people, —

*Bru.* Mark'd you his lip and eyes?



*Bru.* Come :  
 Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,  
 Though Marcius earn'd them not; and all his  
 faults 360  
 To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed  
 In aught he merit not.

*Sic.* Let's hence, and hear  
 How the dispatch is made<sup>o</sup>; and in what fashion,  
 More than his singularity,<sup>o</sup> he goes 365  
 Upon this present action.

*Bru.* Let's along. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*Corioli. The Senate-house.*

*Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with SENATORS of Corioli.*

*First Sen.* So, your opinion<sup>1</sup> is, Aufidius,  
 That they of Rome are enter'd in<sup>o</sup>our counsels,  
 And know how we proceed.

*Auf.* Is it not yours?  
 What ever have been thought on in this state, 5  
 That could be brought to bodily act<sup>o</sup> ere Rome  
 Had circumvention<sup>o</sup>? 'Tis not four days gone  
 Since I heard thence: these are the words: I think





Let us alone to guard Corioli :  
 If they set down before's, for the remove<sup>o</sup>  
 Bring up your army ; but, I think, you'll find 35  
 They've not prepared for us.

*Auf.* O, doubt not that ;  
 I speak from certainties. Nay, more,  
 Some parcels of their power are forth already,  
 And only hitherward. I leave your honours. 40  
 If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,  
 'Tis sworn<sup>o</sup> between us, we shall ever strike  
 Till one can do no more.

*All.* The gods assist you !

*Auf.* And keep your honours safe ! 45

*First Sen.* Farewell.

*Sec. Sen.* Farewell.

*All.* Farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

*Rome. A room in Marcius' house.*

*Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA : they set them  
 down on two low stools, and sew.*

*Vol.* I pray you, daughter, sing, or express  
 yourself in a more comfortable sort : if my son

were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the 5 embracements where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied, and my only son; when youth with comeliness plucked<sup>o</sup> all gaze his way; when, for a day of kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour 10 from her beholding; I, considering how honour would become such a person; that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir, was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a 15 cruel war<sup>o</sup> I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak.<sup>o</sup> I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

20 *Vir.* But had he died in the business, madam :  
how then ?

*Vol.* Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely : had I a dozen sons, each in 25 my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die

nobly for their country than one voluptuously  
surfeit out of action.

*Enter a GENTLEWOMAN.*

*Gent.* Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to  
visit you. 30

*Vir.* Beseech<sup>o</sup> you, give me leave to retire  
myself.<sup>o</sup>

*Vol.* Indeed, you shall not.

Methinks I hear hither<sup>o</sup> your husband's drum ;  
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair ; 35  
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning  
him :

Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus :  
'Come on, you cowards ! you were got in fear,  
Though you were born in Rome : ' his bloody 40  
brow

With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,  
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow  
Or all, or lose his hire.

*Vir.* His bloody brow ! O Jupiter, no blood ! 45

*Vol.* Away, you fool ! it more becomes a man  
Than gilt his trophy.

Tell Valeria

We are fit to bid her welcome. *[Exit Gent.*

50 *Vir.* Heavens bless<sup>o</sup> my lord from fell  
Aufidius!

*Vol.* He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee,  
And tread upon his neck.

*Enter VALERIA, with an USHER and  
GENTLEWOMAN.*

*Val.* My ladies both, good day to you.

55 *Vol.* Sweet madam.

*Vir.* I am glad to see your ladyship.

*Val.* How do you both? you are manifest  
housekeepers.<sup>o</sup> What are you sewing here? A  
fine spot,<sup>o</sup> in good faith. How does your little  
60 son?

*Vir.* I thank your ladyship; well, good  
madam.

*Vol.* He had rather see the swords and hear a  
drum than look upon his schoolmaster.

65 *Val.* O' my word, the father's son; I'll swear,  
'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon  
him o' Wednesday half an hour together; has

such a confirmed<sup>o</sup> countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly<sup>o</sup>; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over 70 and over he comes, and up again; caught it again: or whether his fall enraged him, or how it was, he did so set his teeth, and tear it; O, I warrant, how he mammoocked<sup>o</sup> it!

*Vol.* One on's father's moods. 75

*Val.* Indeed, la,<sup>o</sup> 'tis a noble child.

*Vir.* A crack,<sup>o</sup> madam.

*Val.* Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon. 80

*Vir.* No, good madam; I will not out of doors.

*Val.* Not out of doors!

*Vol.* She shall, she shall.

*Vir.* Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the 85 wars.

*Val.* Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably: come, you must go visit the good lady that lies ill.

*Vir.* I will wish her speedy strength, and visit 90 her with my prayers; but I cannot go thither.

*Vol.* Why, I pray you?

*Vir.* 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

95 *Val.* You would be another Penelope: yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths.<sup>o</sup> Come; I would your cambric were sensible<sup>o</sup> as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come,  
100 you shall go with us.

*Vir.* No, good madam, pardon me; indeed, I will not forth.

*Val.* In truth, la, go with me, and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

105 *Vir.* O, good madam, there can be none yet.

*Val.* Verily, I do not jest with you; there came news from him last night.

*Vir.* Indeed, madam?

110 *Val.* In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is: the Volsces have an army forth; against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one part of our Roman power: your lord and Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli; they nothing<sup>o</sup> doubt prevailing, and  
115 to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour; and so, I pray, go with us.

*Vir.* Give me excuse, good madam; I will obey you in every thing hereafter.

*Vol.* Let her alone, lady; as she is now, she will but disease<sup>o</sup> our better mirth.<sup>o</sup> 120

*Val.* In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o' door, and go along with us.

*Vir.* No, at a word,<sup>o</sup> madam; indeed, I must 125  
not.

I wish you much mirth.

*Val.* Well then, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV.

*Before Corioli.*

*Enter, with drum and colours, MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, CAPTAINS and SOLDIERS. To them a MESSENGER.*

*Mar.* Yonder comes news; a wager they have met.

*Lart.* My horse to yours, no.

*Mar.* 'Tis done.

5 *Lart.* Agreed.

*Mar.* Say, has our general met the enemy?

*Mess.* They lie in view; but have not spoke<sup>o</sup>  
as yet.

*Lart.* So, the good horse is mine.

10 *Mar.* I'll buy him of you.

*Lart.* No, I'll nor sell nor give him: lend you  
him I will

For half a hundred years. Summon the town.<sup>o</sup>

*Mar.* How far off lie these armies?

15 *Mess.* Within this mile and half.

*Mar.* Then shall we hear their 'larum,<sup>o</sup> and  
they ours.

Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work,

That we with smoking swords may march from  
20 hence,

To help our fielded friends<sup>o</sup>! Come, blow thy  
blast.

*They sound a parley. Enter two SENATORS with  
others, on the walls.*

Tullus Aufidius,<sup>o</sup> is he within your walls?

25 *First Sen.* No, nor a man that fears you less  
than he,



That's lesser than a little. Hark, our drums  
*[Drums afar off.*

Are bringing forth our youth! we'll break our  
 walls,

Rather than they shall pound us up°: our gates,  
 Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with 30  
 rushes;

They'll open of themselves. Hark you, far off!  
*[Alarum far off.*

There is Aufidius; list, what work he makes  
 Amongst your cloven army.°

*Mar.* O, they are at it! 35

*Lart.* Their noise be our instruction. Lad-  
 ders, ho!

*Enter the army of the Volsces.*

*Mar.* They fear us not, but issue forth their  
 city.

Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight 40  
 With hearts more proof than shields. Advance,  
 brave Titus:

They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,°  
 Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on,  
 my fellows:

He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,  
And he shall feel mine edge.

*Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their  
trenches. Re-enter MARCIUS, cursing.*

*Mar.* All the contagion of the south<sup>o</sup> light on  
you,  
50 You shames of Rome! you herd of — Boils and  
plagues  
Plaster you o'er; that you may be abhorr'd  
Farther than seen, and one infect another  
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese,  
55 That bear the shapes of men, how have you run  
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and  
hell!  
All hurt behind; backs red, and faces pale  
With flight and agued<sup>o</sup> fear! Mend, and charge  
60 home,  
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe,  
And make my wars on you: look to't! come on;  
If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their  
wives,  
65 As they us to our trenches followed.

*Another alarum. The Volsces fly, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates.*

So, now the gates are ope: now prove good seconds:

'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,  
Not for the fliers: mark me, and do the like.

*[Enters the gates.*

*First Sol.* Fool-hardiness; not I.° 70

*Sec. Sol.* Nor I. *[Marcius is shut in.*

*First Sol.* See, they have shut him in.

*All.* To the pot,° I warrant him.

*[Alarum continues.*

*Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS.*

*Lart.* What is become of Marcius?

*All.* Slain, sir, doubtless. 75

*First Sol.* Following the fliers at the very heels,  
With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,  
Clapp'd to their gates: he is himself alone,  
To answer all the city.

*Lart.* O noble fellow! 80  
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,°

And, when it bows, stands up! Thou art left,  
 Marcius :

A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,  
 85 Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier  
 Even to Cato's wish,<sup>o</sup> not fierce and terrible  
 Only in strokes ; but, with thy grim looks and  
 The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,  
 Thou madest thine enemies shake, as if the world  
 90 Were feverous and did tremble.

*Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy.*

*First Sol.* Look, sir.

*Lart.* O, 'tis Marcius !

Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.<sup>o</sup>

*[They fight, and all enter the city.]*

#### SCENE V.

*Within Corioli. A street.*

*Enter certain Romans, with spoils.*

*First Rom.* This will I carry to Rome.

*Sec. Rom.* And I this.

*Third Rom.* A murrain<sup>o</sup> on't ! I took this for  
 silver. *[Alarum continues still afar off.]*

*Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS with a trumpet.*

*Mar.* See here these movers<sup>o</sup> that do prize  
their hours

At a crack'd drachma<sup>o</sup>! Cushions, leaden spoons,  
Irons of a doit,<sup>o</sup> doublets that hangmen would  
Bury with those that wore them,<sup>o</sup> these base  
slaves, 10

Ere yet the fight be done, pack up: down with  
them!

And hark, what noise the general makes! To  
him!

There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius, 15  
Piercing our Romans: then, valiant Titus, take  
Convenient numbers to make good<sup>o</sup> the city;  
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will  
haste

To help Cominius. 20

*Lart.* Worthy sir, thou bleed'st;

Thy exercise hath been too violent

For a second course of fight.

*Mar.* Sir, praise me not;

My work hath yet not warm'd me: fare you well: 25

The blood I drop is rather physical°  
 Than dangerous to me : to Aufidius° thus  
 I will appear, and fight.

*Lart.* Now the fair goddess, Fortune,  
 30 Fall deep in love with thee ; and her great charms  
 Misguide thy opposers' swords ! Bold gentleman,  
 Prosperity be thy page !

*Mar.* Thy friend no less  
 Than those° she placeth highest ! So farewell.

35 *Lart.* Thou worthiest Marcius !

[*Exit Marcius.*

Go sound thy trumpet in the market-place ;  
 Call thither all the officers o' the town,  
 Where they shall know our mind. Away !

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI.

*Near the camp of Cominius.*

*Enter COMINIUS, as it were in retire, with SOLDIERS.*

*Com.* Breathe you, my friends : well fought ;  
 we are come off  
 Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands,

Nor cowardly in retire : believe me, sirs,  
 We shall be charged again. Whiles we have 5  
     struck,  
 By interims and conveying gusts<sup>o</sup> we have heard  
 The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods,  
 Lead their successes as we wish our own,  
 That both our powers, with smiling fronts en- 10  
     countering,  
 May give you thankful sacrifice !

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

Thy news ?

*Mess.* The citizens of Corioli have issued,  
 And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle : 15  
 I saw our party to their trenches driven,  
 And then I came away.

*Com.* Though thou speak'st truth,  
 Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't  
     since ? 20

*Mess.* Above an hour, my lord.

*Com.* 'Tis not a mile<sup>o</sup> ; briefly<sup>o</sup> we heard their  
     drums :  
 How couldst thou in a mile confound<sup>o</sup> an hour,  
 And bring thy news so late ? 25

*Mess.* Spies of the Volsces  
 Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel  
 Three or four miles about; else had I, sir,  
 Half an hour since brought my report.

*Enter MARCIUS.*

30 *Com.* Who's yonder,  
 That does appear as he were flay'd? O gods!  
 He has the stamp of Marcius; and I have  
 Before-time seen him thus.

*Mar.* Come I too late?

35 *Com.* The shepherd knows not thunder from  
 a tabor  
 More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue  
 From every meaner man.

*Mar.* Come I too late?

40 *Com.* Ay, if you come not in the blood of  
 others,  
 But mantled in your own.

*Mar.* O, let me clip<sup>o</sup> ye  
 In arms as sound as when I woo'd; in heart  
 45 As merry as when our nuptial day was done.

*Com.* Flower of warriors,  
 How is't with Titus Lartius?



*Mar.* As with a man busied about decrees :  
 Condemning some to death, and some to exile ;  
 Ransoming him or pitying,<sup>o</sup> threatening the 50  
 other ;  
 Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,  
 Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,  
 To let him slip at will.<sup>o</sup>

*Com.* Where is that slave 55  
 Which told me they had beat you to your  
 trenches !  
 Where is he ? call him hither.

*Mar.* Let him alone ;  
 He did inform the truth : but for our gentlemen, 60  
 The common file — a plague ! tribunes for  
 them<sup>o</sup> ! —  
 The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did  
 budge  
 From rascals worse than they. 65

*Com.* But how prevail'd you ?

*Mar.* Will the time serve to tell ? I do not  
 think.

Where is the enemy ? are you lords o' the field ?  
 If not, why cease you till you are so ? 70

*Com.* Marcus,

We have at disadvantage fought, and did  
Retire to win our purpose.

*Mar.* How lies their battle<sup>o</sup>? know you on  
75 which side

They have placed their men of trust?

*Com.* As I guess, Marcius,  
Their bands i' the vaward<sup>o</sup> are the Antiates,  
Of the best trust; o'er them Aufidius,  
80 Their very heart of hope.

*Mar.* I do beseech you,  
By all the battles wherein we have fought,  
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows  
We have made to endure friends, that you directly  
85 Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates;  
And that you not delay the present,<sup>o</sup> but,  
Filling the air with swords advanced<sup>o</sup> and darts,  
We prove<sup>o</sup> this very hour.

*Com.* Though I could wish  
90 You were conducted to a gentle bath,  
And balms applied to you, yet dare I never  
Deny your asking: take your choice of those  
That best can aid your action.

*Mar.* Those are they  
95 That most are willing. If any such be here —

As it were sin to doubt — that love this painting  
 Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear<sup>o</sup>  
 Lesser his person than an ill report;  
 If any think brave death outweighs bad life,  
 And that his country's dearer than himself; 100  
 Let him alone, or so many so minded,  
 Wave thus, to express his disposition,  
 And follow Marcius.

*[They all shout, and wave their swords; take  
 him up in their arms, and cast up their caps.]*

O, me alone! make you a sword of me<sup>o</sup>?  
 If these shows be not outward, which of you 105  
 But is four Volsces? none of you but is  
 Able to bear against the great Aufidius  
 A shield as hard as his. A certain number,  
 Though thanks to all, must I select from all: the  
 rest 110

Shall bear the business in some other fight,  
 As cause will be obey'd.<sup>o</sup> Please you to march;  
 And four<sup>o</sup> shall quickly draw out my command,  
 Which men are best inclined.

*Com.* March on, my fellows: 115  
 Make good this ostentation, and you shall  
 Divide<sup>o</sup> in all with us. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE VII.

*The gates of Corioli.*

TITUS LARTIUS, *having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with a LIEUTENANT, other SOLDIERS, and a SCOUT.*

*Lart.* So, let the ports<sup>o</sup> be guarded: keep your duties,

As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch  
Those centuries<sup>o</sup> to our aid; the rest will serve  
5 For a short holding: if we lose the field,  
We cannot keep the town.

*Lieu.* Fear not our care, sir.

*Lart.* Hence, and shut your gates upon's.

Our guider, come; to the Roman camp conduct

10

us.

*[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE VIII.

*A field of battle between the Roman and the Volscian camps.*

*Alarum as in battle. Enter, from opposite sides, MARCIUS and AUFIDIUS.*

*Mar.* I'll fight with none but thee; for I do  
hate thee  
Worse than a promise-breaker.

*Auf.* We hate alike :  
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor 5  
More than thy fame and envy.° Fix thy foot.

*Mar.* Let the first budger die the other's slave,  
And the gods doom him after!

*Auf.* If I fly, Marcius,  
Holloa° me like a hare. 10

*Mar.* Within these three hours, Tullus,  
Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,  
And made what work I pleased : 'tis not my blood  
Wherein thou seest me mask'd; for thy revenge  
Wrench up° thy power to the highest. 15

*Auf.* Wert thou the Hector

That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,<sup>o</sup>  
 Thou shouldst not 'scape me here.

*[They fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid  
 of Aufidius. Marcius fights till they are driven  
 in breathless.]*

Officious, and not valiant, you have shamed me  
 20 In your condemned seconds.<sup>o</sup> *[Exeunt.]*

### SCENE IX.

*The Roman camp.*

*Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Enter,  
 from one side, COMINIUS with the Romans; from  
 the other side, MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf.*

*Com.* If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's  
 work,  
 Thou'lt not believe thy deeds: but I'll report it,  
 Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles;  
 5 Where great patricians shall attend, and shrug,<sup>o</sup>  
 I' the end admire; where ladies shall be frighted,  
 And, gladly quaked,<sup>o</sup> hear more; where the dull  
 tribunes,

That, with the fusty plebeians,° hate thine  
 honours, 10  
 Shall say against their hearts 'We thank the gods  
 Our Rome hath such a soldier.'  
 Yet camest thou to a morsel° of this feast,  
 Having fully dined before.

*Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from  
 the pursuit.*

*Lart.* O general, 15  
 Here is the steed, we the caparison :  
 Hadst thou beheld —

*Mar.* Pray now, no more ; my mother,  
 Who has a charter° to extol her blood,  
 When she does praise me grieves me. I have done 20  
 As you have done ; that's what I can : induced  
 As you have been ; that's for my country :  
 He that has but effected his good will  
 Hath overta'en mine act.°

*Com.* You shall not be 25  
 The grave of your deserving ; Rome must know  
 The value of her own : 'twere a concealment  
 Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,°  
 To hide your doings ; and to silence that,

30 Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,  
 Would seem but modest: therefore, I beseech  
 you —

In sign of what you are, not to reward  
 What you have done — before our army hear me.

35 *Mar.* I have some wounds upon me, and they  
 smart

To hear<sup>o</sup> themselves remember'd.

*Com.* Should they not,<sup>o</sup>

Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude,

40 And tent<sup>o</sup> themselves with death. Of all the horses,  
 Whereof we have ta'en good, and good store, of all  
 The treasure in this field achieved and city,  
 We render you the tenth; to be ta'en forth,  
 Before the common distribution, at

45 Your only choice.

*Mar.* I thank you, general;

But cannot make my heart consent to take

A bribe<sup>o</sup> to pay my sword; I do refuse it,

And stand upon my common part with those

50 That have beheld the doing.

*[A long flourish. They all cry 'Marcius! Marcius!'  
 cast up their caps and lances: Cominius and  
 Lartius stand bare.]*



*Mar.* May these same instruments, which you  
 profane,  
 Never sound more! when drums and trumpets  
 shall

I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be 55  
 Made all of false-faced soothing°!

When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,  
 Let him be made an overture for the wars°!  
 No more, I say! For that I have not wash'd  
 My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile° wretch, 60  
 Which without note here's many else have done,  
 You shout me forth

In acclamations hyperbolic°;  
 As if I loved my little should be dieted°  
 In praises sauced with lies. 65

*Com.* Too modest are you;  
 More cruel to your good report than grateful  
 To us that give you truly°: by your patience,  
 If 'gainst yourself you be incensed, we'll put you,  
 Like one that means his proper° harm, in manacles, 70  
 Then reason safely with you. Therefore, be it  
 known,

As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius  
 Wears this war's garland°: in token of the which,

75 My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,  
 With all his trim belonging; and from this time,  
 For what he did before Corioli, call him,  
 With all the applause and clamour of the host,  
 CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS. Bear

80 The addition<sup>o</sup> nobly ever!

[*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.*

*All.* Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

*Cor.* I will go wash;

And when my face is fair, you shall perceive  
 Whether I blush, or no: howbeit, I thank you:

85 I mean to stride your steed; and at all times  
 To undercrest<sup>o</sup> your good addition  
 To the fairness of my power.

*Com.* So, to our tent;

Where, ere we do repose us, we will write

90 To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,  
 Must to Corioli back: send us to Rome  
 The best,<sup>o</sup> with whom we may articulate<sup>o</sup>  
 For their own good and ours.

*Lart.* I shall, my lord.

95 *Cor.* The gods begin to mock me. I, that now  
 Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg  
 Of my lord general.

*Com.* Take't; 'tis yours. What is't?

*Cor.* I sometime lay<sup>o</sup> here in Corioli  
At a poor man's house; he used me kindly: 100  
He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;  
But then Aufidius was within my view,  
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity: I request you  
To give my poor host freedom.

*Com.* O, well begg'd! 105  
Were he the butcher<sup>o</sup> of my son, he should  
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

*Lart.* Marcius, his name?

*Cor.* By Jupiter, forgot:  
I am weary; yea, my memory is tired. 110  
Have we no wine here?

*Com.* Go we to our tent:  
The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time  
It should be look'd to: come. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE X.

*The camp of the Volsces.*

*A flourish. Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS,*  
*bloody, with two or three SOLDIERS.*

*Auf.* The town is ta'en!

*First Sol.* 'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

*Auf.* Condition!

5 I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,  
Being a Volsce, be that I am.° Condition!  
What good condition° can a treaty find  
I' the part that is at mercy? Five times, Marcius,  
I have fought with thee; so often hast thou beat  
10 me;

And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter  
As often as we eat. By the elements,  
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,  
He's mine, or I am his: mine emulation°  
15 Hath not that honour in't it had; for where°  
I thought to crush him in an equal force,  
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way,  
Or wrath or craft may get him.°

*First Sol.* He's the devil.

20 *Auf.* Bolder, though not so subtle. My  
valour's poison'd  
With only suffering stain by him; for him  
Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep nor sanctuary,  
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,  
25 The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,

Embarquements° all of fury, shall lift up  
 Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst  
 My hate to Marcius : where I find him, were it  
 At home, upon my brother's guard,° even there,  
 Against the hospitable canon,° would I 30  
 Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to the  
 city ;

Learn how 'tis held, and what they are that must  
 Be hostages for Rome.

*First Sol.* Will not you go? 35

*Auf.* I am attended° at the cypress grove :  
 I pray you —  
 'Tis south the city mills° — bring me word thither  
 How the world goes, that to the pace of it  
 I may spur on my journey. 40

*First Sol.* I shall, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT SECOND. — SCENE I.

*Rome. A public place.*

*Enter MENENIUS, with the two Tribunes of the people, SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

*Men.* The augurer tells me we shall have news  
to-night.

*Bru.* Good or bad?

*Men.* Not according to the prayer of the  
5 people, for they love not Marcius.

*Sic.* Nature teaches beasts to know their  
friends.

*Men.* Pray you, who does the wolf love?

*Sic.* The lamb.

10 *Men.* Ay, to devour him; as the hungry  
plebeians would the noble Marcius.

*Bru.* He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

*Men.* He's a bear indeed, that lives like a  
lamb.

You two are old men : tell me one thing that 15  
I shall ask you.

*Both.* Well, sir.

*Men.* In what enormity is Marcius poor in,  
that you two have not in abundance?

*Bru.* He's poor in no one fault, but stored with 20  
all.

*Sic.* Especially in pride.

*Bru.* And topping all others in boasting.

*Men.* This is strange now : do you two know  
how you are censured<sup>o</sup> here in the city, I mean of 25  
us o' the right-hand file<sup>o</sup>? do you?

*Both.* Why, how are we censured?

*Men.* Because you talk of pride now, — will  
you not be angry?

*Both.* Well, well, sir, well. 30

*Men.* Why, 'tis no great matter ; for a very  
little thief of occasion<sup>o</sup> will rob you of a great deal  
of patience : give your dispositions the reins, and  
be angry at your pleasures ; at the least, if you  
take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You 35  
blame Marcius for being proud?

*Bru.* We do it not alone, sir.

*Men.* I know you can do very little alone ; for

your helps are many, or else your actions would  
 40 grow wondrous single<sup>o</sup>: your abilities are too  
 infantlike for doing much alone. You talk of  
 pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward  
 the napes of your necks, and make but an interior  
 survey of your good selves<sup>o</sup>! O that you could!

45 *Both.* What then, sir?

*Men.* Why, then you should discover a brace  
 of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates,  
 alias fools, as any in Rome.

*Sic.* Menenius, you are known well enough too.

50 *Men.* I am known to be a humorous<sup>o</sup> patrician,  
 and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a  
 drop of allaying<sup>o</sup> Tiber, in't; said to be something  
 imperfect in favouring the first complaint, hasty  
 and tinder-like upon too trivial motion<sup>o</sup>; one that  
 55 converses more with the night than with the  
 morning: what I think I utter, and spend my  
 malice in my breath. Meeting two such weals-  
 men<sup>o</sup> as you are, — I cannot call you Lycurguses<sup>o</sup>  
 — if the drink you give me touch my palate  
 60 adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't  
 say your worships have delivered the matter well,  
 when I find the ass in compound with the major



part of your syllables<sup>o</sup>: and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell 65 you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm,<sup>o</sup> follows it that I am known well enough too? what harm can you bisson con- spectuities<sup>o</sup> glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too? 70

*Bru.* Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.<sup>o</sup>

*Men.* You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs<sup>o</sup>: you wear out a good wholesome 75 forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller,<sup>o</sup> and then rejourne<sup>o</sup> the controversy of three-pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched 80 with the colic, you make faces like mummers<sup>o</sup>; set up the bloody flag<sup>o</sup> against all patience; and dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing: all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. 85 You are a pair of strange ones.

*Bru.* Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.°

90 *Men.* Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a  
 95 grave as to stuff a botcher's° cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle.° Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion°; though peradventure some of the  
 100 best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den° to your worships: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being° the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians: I will be bold to take my leave of you.

[*Brutus and Sicinius go aside.*]

*Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA.*

105 How now, my as fair as noble ladies,—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler — whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

*Vol.* Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches; for the love of Juno, let's go.

*Men.* Ha! Marcius coming home? 110

*Vol.* Ay, worthy Menenius; and with most prosperous approbation.

*Men.* Take my cap, Jupiter,<sup>o</sup> and I thank thee: Hoo! Marcius coming home?

*Vir.* }  
*Val.* } Nay, 'tis true. 115

*Vol.* Look, here's a letter from him: the state hath another, his wife another; and, I think, there's one at home for you.

*Men.* I will make my very house reel to-night: a letter for me? 120

*Vir.* Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I saw't.

*Men.* A letter for me! it gives me an estate of seven years' health; in which time I will make a lip at the physician: the most sovereign pre-<sup>125</sup>scription in Galen<sup>o</sup> is but empiric<sup>u</sup>tic, and, to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded? he was wont to come home wounded.

*Vir.* O, no, no, no. 130

*Vol.* O, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't.

*Men.* So do I too, if it be not too much: bring a' victory in his pocket? the wounds become him

135 *Vol.* On's brows: Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oaken garland.°

*Men.* Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly?

*Vol.* Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, but Aufidius got off.

140 *Men.* And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that: an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so fidiused° for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate possessed of° this?

145 *Vol.* Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name° of the war; he hath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly.

150 *Vol.* In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

*Men.* Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

*Vir.* The gods grant them true!

*Vol.* True! pow, wow.° 155

*Men.* True! I'll be sworn they are true.  
Where is he wounded? [*To the Tribunes*] God  
save your good worships! Marcius is coming  
home: he has more cause to be proud. Where  
is he wounded? 160

*Vol.* I' the shoulder and i' the left arm: there  
will be large cicatrices to show the people, when  
he shall stand for his place.° He received in the  
repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body.

*Men.* One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh; 165  
there's nine that I know.°

*Vol.* He had, before this last expedition,  
twenty-five wounds upon him.

*Men.* Now it's twenty-seven: every gash was  
an enemy's grave. [*A shout and flourish.*] Hark! 170  
the trumpets.

*Vol.* These are the ushers of Marcius: before  
him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves  
tears:

Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy° arm doth 175  
lie;

Which, being advanced, declines, and then men  
die.°

*A sennet.*° *Trumpets sound. Enter* COMINIUS  
and TITUS LARTIUS; *between them, CORIOLANUS,*  
*crowned with an oaken garland; with CAPTAINS*  
*and SOLDIERS, and a HERALD.*

*Her.* Know, Rome, that all alone Marcus did  
180 fight

Within Corioli gates : where he hath won,  
With a fame, a name to Caius Marcus ; these  
In honour follows Coriolanus.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

[*Flourish.*

185 *All.* Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

*Cor.* No more of this, it does offend my heart ;  
Pray now, no more.

*Com.* Look, sir, your mother !

*Cor.* O,

190 You have, I know, petition'd all the gods

For my prosperity ! [Kneels.

*Vol.* Nay, my good soldier, up ;

My gentle Marcus, worthy Caius, and  
By deed-achieving honour° newly named, —

195 What is it ? — Coriolanus must I call thee ? —

But, O, thy wife !

*Cor.* My gracious silence,° hail!  
 Wouldst thou laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,  
 Thou weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,  
 Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear, 200  
 And mothers that lack sons.

*Men.* Now, the gods crown thee!

*Cor.* And live you yet? [*To Valeria*] O my  
 sweet lady, pardon.

*Vol.* I know not where to turn: O, welcome 205  
 home:

And welcome, general: and ye're welcome all.

*Men.* A hundred thousand welcomes. I  
 could weep,  
 And I could laugh; I am light and heavy. Wel- 210  
 come:

A curse begin at very root on's heart,  
 That is not glad to see thee! You are three  
 That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of  
 men, 215

We have some old crab-trees° here at home that  
 will not

Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors:  
 We call a nettle but a nettle,° and  
 The faults of fools but folly. 220

*Com.* Ever right.

*Cor.* Menenius, ever, ever.°

*Her.* Give way there, and go on.

*Cor.* [To *Volumnia and Virgilia*] Your hand,  
225 and yours :

Ere in your own house I do shade my head,  
The good patricians must be visited ;  
From whom I have received not only greetings,  
But with them change of honours.°

230 *Vol.* I have lived  
To see inherited° my very wishes  
And the buildings of my fancy : only  
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but  
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

235 *Cor.* Know, good mother,  
I had rather be their servant in my way  
Than sway° with them in theirs.

*Com.* On, to the Capitol !

[*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before.*

*Brutus and Sicinius come forward.*

*Bru.* All tongues speak of him, and the bleared  
240 sights

Are spectacted to see him : your prattling nurse  
Into a rapture° lets her baby cry





*Sic.* Doubt not  
 The commoners, for whom we stand, but they  
 Upon their ancient malice will forget  
 270 With the least cause these his new honours ; which  
 That he will give them make I as little question  
 As he is proud to do't.

*Bru.* I heard him swear,  
 Were he to stand for consul, never would he  
 275 Appear i' the market-place, nor on him put  
 The napless vesture of humility,<sup>o</sup>  
 Nor showing, as the manner is, his wounds  
 To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

*Sic.* 'Tis right.  
 280 *Bru.* It was his word : O, he would miss it  
 rather  
 Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him,  
 And the desire of the nobles.

*Sic.* I wish no better  
 285 Than have him hold that purpose and to put it  
 In execution.

*Bru.* 'Tis most like he will.

*Sic.* It shall be to him then, as our good wills,<sup>o</sup>  
 A sure destruction.

290 *Bru.* So it must fall out

To him or our authorities. For an end,<sup>o</sup>  
 We must suggest the people in what hatred  
 He still<sup>o</sup> hath held them; that to's power<sup>o</sup> he  
 would

Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders and <sup>295</sup>  
 Disproportioned<sup>o</sup> their freedoms; holding them,  
 In human action and capacity,  
 Of no more soul nor fitness for the world  
 Than camels in the war, who have their provand<sup>o</sup>  
 Only for bearing burthens, and sore blows <sup>300</sup>  
 For sinking under them.

*Sic.* This, as you say, suggested  
 At some time when his soaring insolence  
 Shall touch the people — which time shall not  
 want, <sup>305</sup>  
 If he be put upon't<sup>o</sup>; and that's as easy  
 As to set dogs on sheep — will be his fire  
 To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze  
 Shall darken him for ever.

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Bru.* What's the matter? <sup>310</sup>  
*Mess.* You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis  
 thought

That Marcius shall be consul :

I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and  
 315 The blind to hear him speak : matrons flung  
       gloves,

Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,<sup>o</sup>  
 Upon him as he pass'd : the nobles bended,  
 As to Jove's statue, and the commons made  
 320 A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts :  
 I never saw the like.

*Bru.*                            Let's to the Capitol,  
 And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,  
 But hearts for the event.<sup>o</sup>

325 *Sic.*                            Have with you.<sup>o</sup> [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*The same. The Capitol.*

*Enter two OFFICERS, to lay cushions.*

*First Off.* Come, come, they are almost here.  
 How many stand for consulships?

*Sec. Off.* Three, they say : but 'tis thought of  
 every one Coriolanus will carry it.

*First Off.* That's a brave fellow; but he's  
vengeance proud,<sup>o</sup> and loves not the common  
people.

*Sec. Off.* Faith, there have been many great  
men that have flattered the people, who ne'er  
loved them; and there be many that they have  
loved, they know not wherefore: so that, if they  
love they know not why, they hate upon no  
better a ground: therefore, for Coriolanus neither  
to care whether they love or hate him manifests  
the true knowledge he has in<sup>o</sup> their disposition; 15  
and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly  
see't.

*First Off.* If he did not care whether he had  
their love or no, he waved<sup>o</sup> indifferently 'twixt  
doing them neither good nor harm: but he seeks 20  
their hate with greater devotion than they can  
render it him, and leaves nothing undone that  
may fully discover him their opposite.<sup>o</sup> Now,  
to seem to affect<sup>o</sup> the malice and displeasure of  
the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, 25  
to flatter them for their love.

*Sec. Off.* He hath deserved worthily of his  
country: and his ascent is not by such easy

degrees as those who, having been supple and  
 30 courteous to the people, bonneted,<sup>o</sup> without any  
 further deed to have them at all into their estima-  
 tion and report: but he hath so planted his  
 honours in their eyes and his actions in their  
 hearts, that for their tongues to be silent and not  
 35 confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury;  
 to report otherwise were a malice that, giving  
 itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke  
 from every ear that heard it.

*First Off.* No more of him; he's a worthy  
 40 man: make way, they are coming.

*A sennet. Enter, with LICATORS before them,  
 COMINIUS the Consul, MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS,  
 SENATORS, SICINIUS and BRUTUS. The SEN-  
 ATORS take their places; the TRIBUNES take their  
 places by themselves. CORIOLANUS stands.*

*Men.* Having determined of the Volsces<sup>o</sup> and  
 To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,  
 As the main point of this our after-meeting,  
 To gratify<sup>o</sup> his noble service that  
 45 Hath thus stood for his country: therefore,  
 please you,

Most reverend and grave elders, to desire  
 The present consul, and last general  
 In our well-found<sup>o</sup> successes, to report  
 A little of that worthy work perform'd 50  
 By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom  
 We met here, both to thank and to remember  
 With honours like himself.

*First Sen.* Speak, good Cominius:  
 Leave nothing out for length, and make us think 55  
 Rather our state's defective for requital  
 Than we to stretch it out.<sup>o</sup> [*To the Tribunes*]  
 Masters o' the people,  
 We do request your kindest ears, and after,  
 Your loving motion<sup>o</sup> toward the common body, 60  
 To yield what passes here.

*Sic.* We are convented<sup>o</sup>  
 Upon a pleasing treaty,<sup>o</sup> and have hearts  
 Inclinable to honour and advance  
 The theme of our assembly. 65

*Bru.* Which the rather  
 We shall be bless'd<sup>o</sup> to do, if he remember  
 A kinder value of the people than  
 He hath hereto prized them at.

*Men.* That's off, that's off<sup>o</sup>; 70

I would you rather had been silent. Please you  
To hear Cominius speak?

*Bru.* Most willingly :

But yet my caution was more pertinent  
75 Than the rebuke you give it.

*Men.* He loves your people ;  
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.

Worthy Cominius, speak. [*Coriolanus offers to go  
away.*] Nay, keep your place.

80 *First Sen.* Sit, Coriolanus ; never shame to  
hear

What you have nobly done.

*Cor.* Your honours' pardon :

I had rather have my wounds to heal again,  
85 Than hear say how I got them.

*Bru.* Sir, I hope

My words disbench'd<sup>o</sup> you not.

*Cor.* No, sir : yet oft,

When blows have made me stay, I fled from  
90 words.

You sooth'd<sup>o</sup> not, therefore hurt not : but your  
people,

I love them as they weigh.<sup>o</sup>

*Men.* Pray now, sit down.



*Cor.* I had rather have one scratch my head 95  
i' the sun

When the alarum were struck than idly sit  
To hear my nothings monster'd.° [Exit.

*Men.* Masters of the people,  
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter — 100  
That's thousand to one° good one—when you  
now see

He had rather venture all his limbs for honour  
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Co-  
minius. 105

*Com.* I shall lack voice : the deeds of Coriola-  
nus

Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held  
That valour is the chiefest virtue and  
Most dignifies the haver : if it be, 110  
The man I speak of cannot in the world  
Be singly° counterpoised. At sixteen years,  
When Tarquin made a head for Rome,° he fought  
Beyond the mark of others : our then dictator,  
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight, 115  
When with his Amazonian chin° he drove  
The bristled lips before him : he bestrid  
An o'er-press'd Roman, and i' the consul's view

Slew three opposers : Tarquin's self he met,  
120 And struck him on his knee<sup>o</sup> : in that day's feats,  
When he might act the woman in the scene,<sup>o</sup>  
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed  
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age  
Man-enter'd thus,<sup>o</sup> he waxed like a sea ;  
125 And, in the brunt of seventeen battles since,  
He lurch'd<sup>o</sup> all swords of the garland. For this  
last,  
Before and in Corioli, let me say,  
I cannot speak him home<sup>o</sup> : he stopp'd the fliers ;  
130 And by his rare example made the coward  
Turn terror into sport : as weeds before  
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd,  
And fell below his stem ; his sword, death's stamp,  
Where it did mark, it took<sup>o</sup> ; from face to foot  
135 He was a thing of blood, whose every motion  
Was timed with dying cries : alone he enter'd  
The mortal<sup>o</sup> gate of the city, which he painted  
With shunless destiny<sup>o</sup> ; aidless came off,  
And with a sudden re-enforcement struck  
140 Corioli like a planet<sup>o</sup> : now all's his :  
When, by and by, the din of war gan pierce  
His ready sense ; then straight his doubled spirit

Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,<sup>o</sup>  
 And to the battle came he ; where he did  
 Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if 145  
 'Twere a perpetual spoil : and till we call'd  
 Both field and city ours, he never stood  
 To ease his breast with panting.

*Men.* Worthy man !

*First Sen.* He cannot but with measure<sup>o</sup> fit the 150  
 honours

Which we devise him.

*Com.* Our spoils he kick'd at,  
 And look'd upon things precious, as they were  
 The common muck of the world : he covets less 155  
 Than misery<sup>o</sup> itself would give ; rewards  
 His deeds with doing them, and is content  
 To spend the time to end it.<sup>o</sup>

*Men.* He's right noble :  
 Let him be call'd for. 160

*First Sen.* Call Coriolanus.

*Off.* He doth appear.

*Re-enter CORIOLANUS.*

*Men.* The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased  
 To make thee consul.

165 *Cor.* I do owe them still<sup>o</sup>  
My life and services.

*Men.* It then remains  
That you do speak to the people.

*Cor.* I do beseech you,  
170 Let me o'erleap that custom,<sup>o</sup> for I cannot  
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them,  
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage:  
please you  
That I may pass<sup>o</sup> this doing.

175 *Sic.* Sir, the people  
Must have their voices<sup>o</sup>; neither will they bate  
One jot of ceremony.

*Men.* Put them not to't:  
Pray you, go fit you to the custom, and  
180 Take to you, as your predecessors have,  
Your honour with your form.<sup>o</sup>

*Cor.* It is a part  
That I shall blush in acting, and might well  
Be taken from the people.

185 *Bru.* Mark you that?

*Cor.* To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus:  
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,  
As if I had received them for the hire  
Of their breath only!

*Men.* Do not stand upon't.<sup>o</sup> 190  
 We recommend to you,<sup>o</sup> tribunes of the people,  
 Our purpose to them : and to our noble consul  
 Wish we all joy and honour.

*Senators.* To Coriolanus come all joy and  
 honour ! 195

*[Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but Sicinius  
 and Brutus.*

*Bru.* You see how he intends to use the people.

*Sic.* May they perceive's intent ! He will  
 require them,<sup>o</sup>

As if he did contemn what he requested  
 Should be in them to give. 200

*Bru.* Come, we'll inform them  
 Of our proceedings here : on the market-place,  
 I know, they do attend us. *[Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

*The same. The Forum.*

*Enter seven or eight CITIZENS.*

*First Cit.* Once,<sup>o</sup> if he do require our voices,  
 we ought not to deny him.

*Sec. Cit.* We may, sir, if we will.

*Third Cit.* We have power in ourselves to do  
5 it, but it is a power that we have no power to do :  
for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds,  
we are to put our tongues into those wounds and  
speak for them ; so, if he tell us his noble deeds,  
we must also tell him our noble acceptance of  
10 them. Ingratitude is monstrous : and for the  
multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a mon-  
ster of the multitude ; of the which we being  
members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous  
members.

15 *First Cit.* And to make us no better thought  
of, a little help will serve ; for once<sup>o</sup> we stood up  
about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us  
the many-headed multitude.<sup>o</sup>

*Third Cit.* We have been called so of many ; not  
20 that our heads are some brown, some black, some  
auburn,<sup>o</sup> some bald, but that our wits are so  
diversely coloured : and truly I think, if all our  
wits were to issue out of one skull, they would  
fly east, west, north, south, and their consent  
25 of<sup>o</sup> one direct way should be at once to all the  
points o' the compass.

*Sec. Cit.* Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would fly?

*Third Cit.* Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will; 'tis strongly wedged up in <sup>30</sup> a blockhead; but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward.

*Sec. Cit.* Why that way?

*Third Cit.* To lose itself in a fog; where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the <sup>35</sup> fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife.

*Sec. Cit.* You are never without your tricks: you may, you may.<sup>o</sup>

*Third Cit.* Are you all resolved to give your <sup>40</sup> voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

*Enter CORIOLANUS in a gown of humility, with  
MENENIUS.*

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility<sup>o</sup>: mark his behaviour. We are not to stay all <sup>45</sup> together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make





*Cor.* Bid them wash their faces,  
And keep their teeth clean. [*Re-enter two of the  
Citizens.*] So, here comes a brace.

*Re-enter a third CITIZEN.*

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here. 75

*Third Cit.* We do, sir; tell us what hath  
brought you to't.

*Cor.* Mine own desert.

*Sec. Cit.* Your own desert!

*Cor.* Ay, but not mine own desire. 80

*Third Cit.* How! not your own desire!

*Cor.* No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to  
trouble the poor with begging.

*Third Cit.* You must think, if we give you  
any thing, we hope to gain by you. 85

*Cor.* Well then, I pray, your price o' the  
consulship?

*First Cit.* The price is, to ask it kindly.°

*Cor.* Kindly! Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I  
have wounds to show you, which shall be yours 90  
in private.° Your good voice, sir; what say  
you?

*Sec. Cit.* You shall ha't, worthy sir.

*Cor.* A match, sir. There's in all two worthy  
95 voices begged. I have your alms: adieu.°

*Third Cit.* But this is something odd.

*Sec. Cit.* An 'twere to give again, — but 'tis  
no matter.                    [*Exeunt the three Citizens.*]

*Re-enter two other CITIZENS.*

*Cor.* Pray you now, if it may stand with the  
100 tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have  
here the customary° gown.

*Fourth Cit.* You have deserved nobly of your  
country, and you have not desired nobly.

*Cor.* Your enigma?

105 *Fourth Cit.* You have been a scourge to her  
enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you  
have not indeed loved the common people.

*Cor.* You should account me the more virtu-  
ous, that I have not been common in my love.  
110 I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother,° the people,  
to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a con-  
dition° they account gentle: and since the wis-  
dom of their choice is rather to have my hat  
than my heart, I will practise the insinuating  
115 nod, and be off° to them most counterfeitly; that

is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

*Fifth Cit.* We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily. 120

*Fourth Cit.* You have received many wounds for your country.

*Cor.* I will not seal<sup>o</sup> your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no farther. 125

*Both Cit.* The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Cor.* Most sweet voices!  
Better it is to die, better to starve,  
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve. 130  
Why in this woolvish toge<sup>o</sup> should I stand here;  
To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear,  
Their needless vouches<sup>o</sup>? Custom calls me to't:  
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,  
The dust on antique time would lie unswept, 135  
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd  
For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,  
Let the high office and the honour go

To one that would do thus. I am half through :  
 140 The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

*Re-enter three CITIZENS more.*

Here come moe<sup>o</sup> voices.

Your voices : for your voices I have fought ;  
 Watch'd for your voices ; for your voices bear  
 Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six  
 145 I have seen, and heard of ; for your voices<sup>o</sup> have  
 Done many things, some less, some more : your  
 voices :

Indeed, I would be consul.

*Sixth Cit.* He has done nobly, and cannot go  
 150 without any honest man's voice.

*Seventh Cit.* Therefore let him be consul : the  
 gods give him joy, and make him good friend to  
 the people !

*All.* Amen, amen. God save thee, noble  
 155 consul ! [*Exeunt.*

*Cor.* Worthy voices !

*Re-enter MENENIUS, with BRUTUS and SICINIUS.*

*Men.* You have stood your limitation<sup>o</sup> ; and  
 the tribunes

Endue you with the people's voice : remains  
 That in the official marks<sup>o</sup> invested you 160  
 Anon do meet the senate.

*Cor.* Is this done?

*Sic.* The custom of request you have discharged :

The people do admit you, and are summon'd 165  
 To meet anon upon your approbation.<sup>o</sup>

*Cor.* Where? at the senate-house?

*Sic.* There, Coriolanus.

*Cor.* May I change these garments?

*Sic.* You may, sir. 170

*Cor.* That I'll straight do, and, knowing myself again,

Repair to the senate-house.

*Men.* I'll keep you company. Will you along? 175

*Bru.* We stay here for the people.

*Sic.* Fare you well.

*[Exeunt Coriolanus and Menenius.*

He has it now ; and, by his looks, methinks  
 'Tis warm at's heart.

*Bru.* With a proud heart he wore 180  
 His humble weeds. Will you dismiss the people?

*Re-enter* CITIZENS

*Sic.* How now, my masters! have you chose this man?

*First Cit.* He has our voices, sir.

185 *Bru.* We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.°

*Sec. Cit.* Amen, sir: to my poor unworthy notice,

He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

190 *Third Cit.* Certainly

He flouted us downright.

*First Cit.* No, 'tis his kind of speech; he did not mock us.

*Sec. Cit.* Not one amongst us, save yourself,  
195 but says

He used us scornfully: he should have show'd us His marks of merit, wounds received for's country.

*Sic.* Why, so he did, I am sure.

*Citizens.* No, no; no man saw 'em.

200 *Third Cit.* He said he had wounds which he could show in private;

And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,

'I would be consul,' says he: 'aged custom,°

But by your voices, will not so permit me;

Your voices therefore.' When we granted that, 205  
 Here was 'I thank you for your voices : thank you :  
 Your most sweet voices : now you have left your  
 voices,

I have no further with you.' Was not this  
 mockery? 210

*Sic.* Why, either were you ignorant to see't,  
 Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness  
 To yield your voices?

*Bru.* Could you not have told him,  
 As you were lesson'd, when he had no power, 215  
 But was a petty servant to the state,  
 He was your enemy ; ever spake against  
 Your liberties and the charters<sup>o</sup> that you bear  
 I' the body of the weal<sup>o</sup> : and now, arriving<sup>o</sup>  
 A place of potency and sway o' the state, 220  
 If he should still malignantly remain  
 Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might  
 Be curses to yourselves? You should have said,  
 That as his worthy deeds did claim no less  
 Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature 225  
 Would think upon you for your voices, and  
 Translate his malice towards you into love,  
 Standing your friendly lord.





*Sec. Cit.* And will deny him :  
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

*First Cit.* I twice five hundred, and their 255  
friends to piece 'em.

*Bru.* Get you hence instantly, and tell those  
friends,  
They have chose a consul that will from them take  
Their liberties, make them of no more voice 260  
Than dogs that are as often beat for barking,  
As therefore kept to do so.

*Sic.* Let them assemble ;  
And, on a safer judgment, all revoke  
Your ignorant election : enforce<sup>o</sup> his pride 265  
And his old hate unto you : besides, forget not  
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,<sup>o</sup>  
How in his suit he scorn'd you : but your loves,  
Thinking upon his services, took from you  
The apprehension of his present portance,<sup>o</sup> 270  
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion  
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

*Bru.* Lay  
A fault on us, your tribunes ; that we labour'd,  
No impediment between, but that you must 275  
Cast your election on him.

*Sic.* Say, you chose him  
 More after our commandment than as guided  
 By your own true affections; and that your  
 280 minds,

Pre-occupied with what you rather must do  
 Than what you should, made you against the grain  
 To voice him consul: lay the fault on us.

*Bru.* Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures  
 285 to you,

How youngly he began to serve his country,  
 How long continued; and what stock he springs  
 of,

The noble house o' the Marcians, from whence  
 290 came

That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,  
 Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;  
 Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,  
 That our best water brought by conduits hither;  
 295 And [Censorinus] nobly named so,  
 Twice being [by the people chosen] censor,  
 Was his great ancestor.

*Sic.* One thus descended,  
 That hath beside well in his person wrought  
 300 To be set high in place, we did commend

To your remembrances : but you have found,  
Scaling<sup>o</sup> his present bearing with his past,  
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke  
Your sudden approbation.

*Bru.* Say, you ne'er had done't — 305  
Harp on that still — but by our putting on<sup>o</sup> :  
And presently, when you have drawn your  
number,<sup>o</sup>  
Repair to the Capitol.

*Citizens.* We will so : almost all 310  
Repent in their election. [*Exeunt Citizens.*]

*Bru.* Let them go on ;  
This mutiny were better put in hazard,<sup>o</sup>  
Than stay, past doubt, for greater :  
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage 315  
With their refusal, both observe and answer  
The vantage of his anger.<sup>o</sup>

*Sic.* To the Capitol, come :  
We will be there before the stream o' the people ;  
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own, 320  
Which we have goaded onward. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THIRD. — SCENE I.

*Rome. A street.*

*Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, all the GENTRY, COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other SENATORS.*

*Cor.* Tullus Aufidius then had made new head°?

*Lart.* He had, my lord; and that it was which caused

5 Our swifter composition.°

*Cor.* So then the Volsces stand but as at first;

Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road

10 Upon's again.

*Com.* They are worn, lord consul, so,  
That we shall hardly in our ages see  
Their banners wave again.

*Cor.* Saw you Aufidius?

*Lart.* On safe-guard<sup>o</sup> he came to me; and did 15  
curse

Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely  
Yielded the town: he is retired to Antium.

*Cor.* Spoke he of me?

*Lart.* He did, my lord. 20

*Cor.* How? what?

*Lart.* How often he had met you, sword to  
sword;

That of all things upon the earth he hated  
Your person most; that he would pawn his 25  
fortunes

To hopeless restitution,<sup>o</sup> so he might  
Be call'd your vanquisher.

*Cor.* At Antium lives he?

*Lart.* At Antium. 30

*Cor.* I wish I had cause to seek him there,<sup>o</sup>  
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

*Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

Behold these are the tribunes of the people,  
The tongues o' the common mouth: I do despise  
them;



*Cor.* It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot, 60  
 To curb the will of the nobility :  
 Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule,  
 Nor ever will be ruled.

*Bru.* Call't not a plot :  
 The people cry you mock'd them ; and of late, 65  
 When corn was given them gratis, you repined,  
 Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them  
 Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

*Cor.* Why, this was known before.

*Bru.* Not to them all. 70

*Cor.* Have you inform'd them sithence°?

*Bru.* How ! I inform them !

*Com.* You are like to do such business.

*Bru.* Not unlike,  
 Each way, to better yours.° 75

*Cor.* Why then should I be consul ? By  
 yond clouds,  
 Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me  
 Your fellow tribune.

*Sic.* You show too much of that° 80  
 For which the people stir : if you will pass  
 To where you are bound, you must inquire your  
 way,

Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit ;  
 85 Or never be so noble as a consul,  
 Nor yoke with him<sup>o</sup> for tribune.

*Men.* Let's be calm.

*Com.* The people are abused<sup>o</sup> ; set on. This  
 paltering

90 Becomes not Rome ; nor has Coriolanus  
 Deserved this so dishonour'd rub,<sup>o</sup> laid falsely  
 I' the plain way of his merit.

*Cor.* Tell me of corn !

This was my speech, and I will speak't again —  
 95 *Men.* Not now, not now.

*First Sen.* Not in this heat, sir, now.

*Cor.* Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,  
 I crave their pardons :

For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them  
 100 Regard me as I do not flatter, and  
 Therein behold themselves<sup>o</sup> : I say again,  
 In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate  
 The cockle<sup>o</sup> of rebellion, insolence, sedition,  
 Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd  
 105 and scatter'd,

By mingling them with us, the honour'd number ;  
 Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that



Which they have given to beggars.

*Men.* Well, no more.

*First Sen.* No more words, we beseech you. 110

*Cor.* How! no more!

As for my country I have shed my blood.

Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs

Coin words till their decay against those measles,<sup>o</sup>

Which we disdain should tetter<sup>o</sup> us, yet sought 115

The very way to catch them.

*Bru.* You speak o' the people,

As if you were a god to punish, not

A man of their infirmity.<sup>o</sup>

*Sic.* 'Twere well 120

We let the people know't.

*Men.* What, what? his choler?

*Cor.* Choler!

Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,

By Jove, 'twould be my mind! 125

*Sic.* It is a mind

That shall remain a poison where it is,

Not poison any further.

*Cor.* Shall remain?

Hear you this Triton<sup>o</sup> of the minnows? mark you 130

His absolute 'shall'?



To know, when two authorities are up,  
 Neither supreme, how soon confusion  
 May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take  
 The one by the other.°

*Com.* Well, on to the market-place. 160

*Cor.* Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth  
 The corn o' the storehouse gratis,° as 'twas used  
 Sometime in Greece, —

*Men.* Well, well, no more of that.

*Cor.* Though there the people had more 165  
 absolute power,  
 I say, they nourish'd disobedience, fed  
 The ruin of the state.

*Bru.* Why, shall the people give  
 One that speaks thus their voice? 170

*Cor.* I'll give my reasons,  
 More worthier than their voices. They know the  
 corn  
 Was not our recompense,° resting well assured  
 They ne'er did service for't: being press'd to the 175  
 war,

Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,  
 They would not thread° the gates. This kind of  
 service



Of general ignorance, — it must omit  
Real necessities, and give way the while 205  
To unstable slightness<sup>o</sup>: purpose so barr'd, it  
follows,

Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech  
you, —

You that will be less fearful than discreet<sup>o</sup>; 210  
That love the fundamental part of state  
More than you doubt the change on't<sup>o</sup>; that  
prefer

A noble life before a long, and wish  
To jump<sup>o</sup> a body with a dangerous physic 215  
That's sure of death without it, — at once pluck  
out

The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick  
The sweet<sup>o</sup> which is their poison. Your dishonour  
Mangles true judgment and bereaves the state 220  
Of that integrity<sup>o</sup> which should become't;  
Not having the power to do the good it would,  
For the ill which doth control't.

*Bru.* Has said enough.

*Sic.* Has spoken like a traitor, and shall 225  
answer

As traitors do.



Cor. Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy<sup>250</sup>  
bones

Out of thy garments.

Sic. Help, ye citizens!

*Enter a rabble of Citizens, with the ÆDILES.*

Men. On both sides more respect.

Sic. Here's he that would take from you all<sup>255</sup>  
your power.

Bru. Seize him, ædiles!

Citizens. Down with him! down with him!

Senators, &c. Weapons, weapons, weapons!

[*They all bustle about Coriolanus, crying,*  
'Tribunes!' 'Patricians!' 'Citizens!' 'What,<sup>260</sup>  
ho!'

'Sicinius!' 'Brutus!' 'Coriolanus!' 'Citizens!'

'Peace, peace, peace!' 'Stay! hold! peace!'

Men. What is about to be? I am out of  
breath. 265

Confusion's<sup>o</sup> near. I cannot speak. You, trib-  
unes

To the people! Coriolanus, patience!

Speak, good Sicinius.

Sic Hear me, people; peace! 270







*Bru.* Lay hands upon him.

320 *Men.* Help Marcius, help,  
You that be noble; help him, young and old!

*Citizens.* Down with him, down with him!

[*In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles, and  
the People, are beat in.*]

*Men.* Go, get you to your house; be gone,  
away!

325 All will be naught else.

*Sec. Sen.* Get you gone.

*Com.* Stand fast;

We have as many friends as enemies

*Men.* Shall it be put to that?

330 *First Sen.* The gods forbid!

I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;

Leave us to cure this cause.

*Men.* For 'tis a sore upon us

You cannot tent<sup>o</sup> yourself: be gone, beseech you.

335 *Com.* Come, sir, along with us.

*Cor.* I would they were barbarians — as they  
are,

Though in Rome litter'd — not Romans — as  
they are not,

340 Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol, —

*Men.* Be gone :  
Put not your worthy<sup>o</sup> rage into your tongue :  
One time will owe another.<sup>o</sup>

*Cor.* On fair ground  
I could beat forty of them. 345

*Men.* I could myself  
Take up a brace o' the best of them ; yea, the two  
tribunes.

*Com.* But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic<sup>o</sup> ;  
And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands 350  
Against a falling fabric. Will you hence  
Before the tag<sup>o</sup> return ? whose rage doth rend  
Like interrupted waters, and o'erbear  
What they are used to bear.

*Men.* Pray you, be gone : 355  
I'll try whether my old wit be in request<sup>o</sup>  
With those that have but little : this must be  
patch'd  
With cloth of any colour.

*Com.* Nay, come away. 360

[*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, and others.*]

*First Patrician.* This man has marr'd his  
fortune.

*Men.* His nature is too noble for the world :

He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,  
 365 Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his  
 mouth :

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;  
 And, being angry, does forget that ever

He heard the name of death. [*A noise within.*

370 Here's goodly work !

*Sec. Pat.* I would they were a-bed !

*Men.* I would they were in Tiber ! What,  
 the vengeance,

Could he not speak 'em fair ?

*Re-enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, with the rabble.*

375 *Sic.* Where is this viper,  
 That would depopulate the city, and  
 Be every man himself ?

*Men.* You worthy tribunes —

*Sic.* He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian  
 380 rock

With rigorous hands : he hath resisted law,  
 And therefore law shall scorn him further trial  
 Than the severity of the public power,  
 Which he so sets at nought.

385 *First Cit.* He shall well know

The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,  
And we their hands.

*Citizens.* He shall, sure on't.

*Men.* Sir, sir, —

*Sic.* Peace! 390

*Men.* Do not cry havoc,° where you should  
but hunt

With modest warrant.°

*Sic.* Sir, how comes't that you  
Have help to make this rescue? 395

*Men.* Hear me speak :  
As I do know the consul's worthiness,  
So can I name his faults, —

*Sic.* Consul! what consul?

*Men.* The consul Coriolanus. 400

*Bru.* He consul!

*Citizens.* No, no, no, no.

*Men.* If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours,  
good people,  
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two ; 405  
The which shall turn you to no further harm  
Than so much loss of time.

*Sic.* Speak briefly then ;  
For we are peremptory to dispatch

410 This viperous traitor : to eject him hence  
 Were but one danger,<sup>o</sup> and to keep him here  
 Our certain death : therefore it is decreed  
 He dies to-night.

*Men.* Now the good gods forbid

415 That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude  
 Towards her deserved<sup>o</sup> children is enroll'd  
 In Jove's own book,<sup>o</sup> like an unnatural dam  
 Should now eat up her own !

*Sic.* He's a disease that must be cut away.

420 *Men.* O, he's a limb that has but a disease ;  
 Mortal, to cut it off ; to cure it, easy.  
 What has he done to Rome that's worthy death ?  
 Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost —  
 Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath  
 425 By many an ounce — he dropp'd it for his  
 country ;  
 And what is left, to lose it by his country  
 Were to us all that do't and suffer it  
 A brand to the end o' the world.

430 *Sic.* This is clean kam.<sup>o</sup>

*Bru.* Merely<sup>o</sup> awry : when he did love his  
 country,  
 It honour'd him.

*Men.* The service<sup>o</sup> of the foot  
Being once gangrened, is not then respected 435  
For what before it was.

*Bru.* We'll hear no more.  
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence ;  
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,  
Spread further. 440

*Men.* One word more, one word.  
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find  
The harm of unscann'd<sup>o</sup> swiftness, will, too late,  
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by  
process<sup>o</sup> ; 445  
Lest parties, as he is beloved, break out,  
And sack great Rome with Romans.

*Bru.* If it were so —

*Sic.* What do ye talk?  
Have we not had a taste of his obedience? 450  
Our ædiles smote? ourselves resisted? Come.

*Men.* Consider this: he has been bred i' the  
wars  
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd  
In bolted language<sup>o</sup> ; meal and bran together 455  
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,  
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him

Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,  
In peace, to his utmost peril.

460 *First Sen.* Noble tribunes,  
It is the humane way : the other course  
Will prove too bloody ; and the end of it  
Unknown to the beginning.

*Sic.* Noble Menenius,  
465 Be you then as the people's officer.  
Masters, lay down your weapons.°

*Bru.* Go not home.

*Sic.* Meet on the market-place. We'll attend  
you there :

470 Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed  
In our first way.

*Men.* I'll bring him to you.

[*To the Senators*] Let me desire your company :  
he must come,

475 Or what is worst will follow.

*First Sen.* Pray you, let's to him.

[*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE II.

*A room in Coriolanus's house.**Enter CORIOLANUS with PATRICIANS.*

*Cor.* Let them pull all about mine ears ; pre-  
 sent me  
 Death° on the wheel, or at wild horses' heels ;  
 Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,  
 That the precipitation° might down stretch 5  
 Below the beam of sight° ; yet will I still  
 Be thus to them.

*A Patrician.* You do the nobler.

*Cor.* I muse my mother  
 Does not approve me further, who was wont 10  
 To call them woollen vassals,° things created  
 To buy and sell with groats,° to show bare heads  
 In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,  
 When one but of my ordinance° stood up  
 To speak of peace or war. 15

*Enter VOLUMNIA.*

I talk of you :  
 Why did you wish me milder ? would you have me

False to my nature? Rather say, I play  
The man I am.

20 *Vol.* O, sir, sir, sir,  
I would have had you put your power well on,  
Before you had worn it out.

*Cor.* Let go.°

*Vol.* You might have been enough the man  
25 you are,

With striving less to be so: lesser had been  
The thwartings of your dispositions, if  
You had not show'd them how ye were disposed,  
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

30 *Cor.* Let them hang.

*Vol.* Aye, and burn too.°

*Enter MENENIUS with the SENATORS.*

*Men.* Come, come, you have been too rough,  
something too rough;

You must return and mend it.

35 *First Sen.* There's no remedy;

Unless, by not so doing, our good city  
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

*Vol.* Pray, be counsell'd:  
I have a heart as little apt° as yours,

But yet a brain that leads my use of anger 40  
To better vantage.

*Men.* Well said, noble woman !  
Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that  
The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic  
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on, 45  
Which I can scarcely bear.

*Cor.* What must I do ?

*Men.* Return to the tribunes.

*Cor.* Well, what then ? what then ?

*Men.* Repent what you have spoke. 50

*Cor.* For them ! I cannot do it to the gods ;  
Must I then do't to them ?

*Vol.* You are too absolute<sup>o</sup> ;  
Though therein you can never be too noble,  
But when extremities speak. I have heard you 55  
say,

Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,  
I' the war do grow together : grant that, and tell  
me,

In peace what each of them by the other lose, 60  
That they combine not there.

*Cor.* Tush, tush !

*Men.* A good demand.

*Vol.* If it be honour in your wars to seem  
 65 The same you are not, which, for your best ends,  
 You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse,  
 That it shall hold companionship in peace  
 With honour, as in war, since that to both  
 It stands in like request?

70 *Cor.* Why force<sup>o</sup> you this?

*Vol.* Because that now it lies you on<sup>o</sup> to speak  
 To the people; not by your own instruction,  
 Nor by the matter which your heart prompts  
 you,

75 But with such words that are but rote<sup>o</sup> in  
 Your tongue, though they may be but syllables  
 Of no allowance<sup>o</sup> to your bosom's truth.

Now, this no more dishonours you at all  
 Than to take in a town with gentle words,  
 80 Which else would put you to your fortune<sup>o</sup> and  
 The hazard of much blood.

I would dissemble with my nature, where  
 My fortunes and my friends at stake required,  
 I should do so in honour. I am in this,<sup>o</sup>  
 85 Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;  
 And you will rather show our general louts  
 How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,

For the inheritance<sup>o</sup> of their loves and safeguard  
Of what that want<sup>o</sup> might ruin.

*Men.* Noble lady! 90  
Come, go with us; speak fair: you may salve so,  
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss  
Of what is past.

*Vol.* I prithee now, my son,  
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand; 95  
And thus far<sup>o</sup> having stretch'd it — here be with  
them —  
Thy knee bussing<sup>o</sup> the stones — for in such  
business  
Action is eloquent, and the eyes of the ignorant 100  
More learned than the ears — waving thy head,  
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,  
Now humble as the ripest mulberry  
That will not hold the handling: or say to them,  
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils 105  
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,  
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,  
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame  
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far  
As thou hast power and person. 110

*Men.* This but done,

Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours ;  
 For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free  
 As words to little purpose.°

115 *Vol.* Prithee now,  
 Go, and be ruled : although I know thou hadst  
 rather  
 Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf  
 Than flatter him in a bower.

*Enter COMINIUS.*

120 Here is Cominius.  
*Com.* I have been i' the market-place ; and,  
 sir, 'tis fit  
 You make strong party, or defend yourself  
 By calmness or by absence : all's in anger.

125 *Men.* Only fair speech.

*Com.* I think 'twill serve, if he  
 Can thereto frame his spirit.

*Vol.* He must, and will.

Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

130 *Cor.* Must I go show them my unbarb'd  
 sconce°? must I,

With my base tongue, give to my noble heart  
 A lie, that it must bear? Well, I will do't :

Yet, were there but this single plot<sup>o</sup> to lose,  
 This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind 135  
 it,

And throw't against the wind. To the market-  
 place!

You have put me now to such a part, which never  
 I shall discharge to the life. 140

*Com.* Come, come, we'll prompt you.

*Vol.* I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast  
 said

My praises made thee first a soldier, so,  
 To have my praise for this, perform a part 145  
 Thou hast not done before.

*Cor.* Well, I must do't:

Away, my disposition, and possess me  
 Some harlot's spirit! my throat of war be turn'd,  
 Which quired with<sup>o</sup> my drum, into a pipe 150

Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice  
 That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves  
 Tent<sup>o</sup> in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take  
 up

The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue 155  
 Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd  
 knees

Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his  
 That hath received an alms! I will not do't;  
 160 Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,  
 And by my body's action teach my mind  
 A most inherent<sup>o</sup> baseness.

*Vol.* At thy choice then:  
 To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour  
 165 Than thou of them.<sup>o</sup> Come all to ruin: let  
 Thy mother rather feel thy pride<sup>o</sup> than fear  
 Thy dangerous stoutness, for I mock at death  
 With as big a heart as thou. Do as thou list.  
 Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from  
 170 me,  
 But owe thy pride thyself.

*Cor.* Pray, be content:  
 Mother, I am going to the market-place;  
 Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,  
 175 Cog<sup>o</sup> their hearts from them, and come home  
 beloved  
 Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going:  
 Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul;  
 Or never trust to what my tongue can do  
 180 I' the way of flattery further.

*Vol.* Do your will. [*Exit.*]



*Com.* Away! the tribunes do attend you: arm  
yourself

To answer mildly; for they are prepared  
With accusations, as I hear, more strong 185  
Than are upon you yet.

*Cor.* The word<sup>o</sup> is 'mildly.' Pray you, let us  
go:

Let them accuse me by invention, I  
Will answer in mine honour. 190

*Men.* Ay, but mildly.

*Cor.* Well, mildly be it then. Mildly!

[*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.

*The same. The Forum.*

*Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

*Bru.* In this point charge him home, that he  
affects

Tyrannical power: if he evades us there, 5  
Enforce him with his envy<sup>o</sup> to the people;  
And that the spoil got on the Antiates<sup>o</sup>  
Was ne'er distributed.

*Enter an ÆDILE.*

What, will he come?

*Æd.* He's coming.

*Bru.* How accompanied?

10 *Æd.* With old Menenius and those senators  
That always favour'd him.

*Sic.* Have you a catalogue  
Of all the voices that we have procured,  
Set down by the poll°?

15 *Æd.* I have; 'tis ready.

*Sic.* Have you collected them by tribes°?

*Æd.* I have.

*Sic.* Assemble presently the people hither:  
And when they hear me say 'It shall be so  
20 I' the right and strength o' the commons,' be it  
either

For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,  
If I say fine, cry 'Fine,' if death, cry 'Death,'  
Insisting on the old prerogative

25 And power i' the truth o' the cause.°

*Æd.* I shall inform them.

*Bru.* And when such time they have begun  
to cry,

Let them not cease, but with a din confused  
 Enforce° the present° execution 30  
 Of what we chance to sentence.

*Æd.* Very well,

*Sic.* Make them be strong, and ready for this  
 hint,

When we shall hap to give't them. 35

*Bru.* Go about it. [*Exit Ædile.*  
 Put him to choler° straight: he hath been used  
 Ever to conquer and to have his worth°  
 Of contradiction: being once chafed, he cannot  
 Be rein'd again to temperance°; then he speaks 40  
 What's in his heart; and that is there which looks  
 With us to break his neck.°

*Sic.* Well, here he comes.

*Enter* CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, *and* COMINIUS,  
*with* SENATORS *and* PATRICIANS.

*Men.* Calmly, I do beseech you.

*Cor.* Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest 45  
 piece  
 Will bear the knave° by the volume. The  
 honour'd gods  
 Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice

50 Supplied with worthy men! plant love among's!  
 Throng our large temples with the shows of  
 peace,

And not our streets with war!

*First Sen.*

Amen, amen.

55 *Men.* A noble wish.

*Re-enter ÆDILE, with Citizens.*

*Sic.* Draw near, ye people.

*Æd.* List to your tribunes; audience: peace,  
 I say!

*Cor.* First, hear me speak.

60 *Both Tri.* Well, say. Peace, ho!

*Cor.* Shall I be charged no further than this  
 present°?

Must all determine here?

*Sic.*

I do demand,

65 If you submit you to the people's voices,

Allow° their officers, and are content

To suffer lawful censure for such faults

As shall be proved upon you.

*Cor.*

I am content.

70 *Men.* Lo, citizens, he says he is content:

The warlike service he has done, consider; think

Upon the wounds his body bears, which show  
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.°

*Cor.* Scratches with briers,  
Scars to move laughter only. 75

*Men.* Consider further,  
That when he speaks not like a citizen,  
You find him like a soldier: do not take  
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,  
But, as I say, such as become a soldier 80  
Rather than envy you.°

*Com.* Well, well, no more.

*Cor.* What is the matter  
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,  
I am so dishonour'd that the very hour° 85  
You take it off again?

*Sic.* Answer to us.

*Cor.* Say, then: 'tis true, I ought so.

*Sic.* We charge you, that you have contrived  
to take 90

From Rome all season'd office,° and to wind  
Yourself into a power tyrannical;  
For which you are a traitor to the people.

*Cor.* How! traitor!

*Men.* Nay, temperately; your promise. 95

*Cor.* The fires i' the lowest hell fold-in the people!

Call me their traitor°! Thou injurious tribune!  
 Within thine eyes sat° twenty thousand deaths,  
 100 In thy hands clutch'd° as many millions, in  
 Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say  
 'Thou liest' unto thee with a voice as free  
 As I do pray the gods.

*Sic.* Mark you this, people?

105 *Citizens.* To the rock, to the rock with him!

*Sic.* Peace!

We need not put new matter to his charge:  
 What you have seen him do and heard him  
 speak,  
 110 Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,  
 Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying  
 Those whose great power must try him; even  
 this,  
 So criminal and in such capital° kind,  
 115 Deserves the extremest death.

*Bru.* But since he hath

Served well for Rome —

*Cor.* What do you prate of service?

*Bru.* I talk of that, that know it.

*Cor.* You? 120

*Men.* Is this the promise that you made your  
mother?

*Com.* Know, I pray you, —

*Cor.* I'll know no further :

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death, 125

Vagabond exile, flaying, pent<sup>o</sup> to linger

But with a grain a day, I would not buy

Their mercy at the price of one fair word,

Nor check my courage<sup>o</sup> for what they can give,

To hav't with saying 'Good morrow.' 130

*Sic.* For that he has,

As much as in him lies, from time to time

Envied against<sup>o</sup> the people, seeking means

To pluck away their power, as now at last

Given hostile strokes, and that not<sup>o</sup> in the presence 135

Of dread justice, but on the ministers

That do distribute it; in the name o' the people,

And in the power of us the tribunes, we,

Even from this instant, banish him our city,

In peril of precipitation 140

From off the Tarpeian, never more

To enter our Rome gates : i' the people's name,

I say it shall be so.

*Citizens.* It shall be so, it shall be so; let him  
145 away:

He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

*Com.* Hear me, my masters, and my common  
friends, —

*Sic.* He's sentenced; no more hearing.

150 *Com.* Let me speak:

I have been consul, and can show for Rome  
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love  
My country's good with a respect more tender,  
More holy and profound, than mine own life,

155 My dear wife's estimate<sup>o</sup>: then if I would  
Speak that —

*Sic.* We know your drift: — speak what?

*Bru.* There's no more to be said, but he is  
banish'd,

160 As enemy to the people and his country:

It shall be so.

*Citizens.* It shall be so, it shall be so.

*Cor.* You common cry<sup>o</sup> of curs! whose breath  
I hate

165 As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize

As the dead carcasses of unburied men

That do corrupt my air, I banish you;

And here remain with your uncertainty!



Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts !  
 Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes, 170  
 Fan you into despair ! Have the power still  
 To banish your defenders ; till at length  
 Your ignorance, which finds not till it feels,  
 Making but reservation of yourselves,°  
 Still your own foes, deliver you as most 175  
 Abated° captives to some nation  
 That won you without blows ! Despising,  
 For you, the city, thus I turn my back :  
 There is a world elsewhere.°

*[Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius, Senators and Patricians.]*

*Æd.* The people's enemy is gone, is gone ! 180

*Citizens.* Our enemy is banish'd ! he is gone !

Hoo ! hoo° !

*[They all shout, and throw up their caps.]*

*Sic.* Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,  
 As he hath follow'd you, with all despite ;  
 Give him deserved vexation.° Let a guard 185  
 Attend us through the city.

*Citizens.* Come, come, let's see him out at  
 gates ; come,

The gods preserve our noble tribunes ! Come.

*[Exeunt.]*

ACT FOURTH. — SCENE I.

*Rome. Before a gate of the city.*

*Enter* CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, *with the young Nobility of Rome.*

*Cor.* Come, leave your tears ; a brief farewell :  
the beast

With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,  
Where is your ancient courage? you were used  
5 To say extremity was the trier of spirits ;  
That common chances common men could bear ;  
That when the sea was calm all boats alike  
Show'd mastership in floating° ; fortune's blows,  
When most struck home, being gentle wounded,

10 craves

A noble cunning° : you were used to load me  
With precepts that would make invincible  
The heart that conn'd them.

*Vir.* O heavens ! O heavens° !

*Cor.* Nay, I prithee, woman, — 15

*Vol.* Now the red pestilence<sup>o</sup> strike all trades  
in Rome,

And occupations perish!

*Cor.* What, what, what!

I shall be loved when I am lack'd.<sup>o</sup> Nay, mother, 20

Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,

If you had been the wife of Hercules,

Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved

Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,

Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my 25  
mother,

I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,

Thy tears are salter than a younger man's

And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime<sup>o</sup>  
general, 30

I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld

Heart-hardening spectacles; tell these sad women,

'Tis fond<sup>o</sup> to wail inevitable strokes,

As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot<sup>o</sup>  
well 35

My hazards still have been your solace: and

Believe't not lightly — though I go alone,

Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen<sup>o</sup>

Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen — your

40 son

Will or exceed the common, or be caught  
With cautelous° baits and practice.

*Vol.* My first son,

Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius

45 With thee awhile: determine on some course,

More than a wild exposture° to each chance

That starts i' the way before thee.

*Cor.* O the gods°!

*Com.* I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee

50 Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us

And we of thee: so, if the time thrust forth

A cause for thy repeal,° we shall not send

O'er the vast world to seek a single man,

And lose advantage, which doth ever cool

55 I' the absence of the needer.

*Cor.* Fare ye well:

Thou hast years upon thee; and thou art too full

Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one

That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.

60 Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and

My friends of noble touch,° when I am forth,

Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.

While I remain above the ground, you shall  
 Hear from me still, and never of me aught  
 But what is like me formerly.° 65

*Men.* That's worthily  
 As any ear can hear. Come let's not weep.  
 If I could shake off but one seven years  
 From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,  
 I'd with thee every foot. 70

*Cor.* Give me thy hand :  
 Come. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

*The same. A street near the gate.*

*Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS,  
 with the ÆDILE.*

*Sic.* Bid them all home ; he's gone, and we'll  
 no further.  
 The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided  
 In his behalf.

*Bru.* Now we have shown our power, 5  
 Let us seem humbler after it is done  
 Than when it was a-doing.

*Sic.* Bid them home :

Say their great enemy is gone, and they

10 Stand in their ancient strength.

*Bru.* Dismiss them home. [*Exit Ædile.*

Here comes his mother.

*Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS.*

*Sic.* Let's not meet her.

*Bru.* Why?

15 *Sic.* They say she's mad.

*Bru.* They have ta'en note of us : keep on  
your way.

*Vol.* O, ye're well met : the hoarded plague  
o' the gods°

20 Requite your love !

*Men.* Peace, peace ; be not so loud.

*Vol.* If that I could for weeping, you should  
hear, —

Nay, and you shall hear some. [*To Brutus*] Will

25 you be gone ?

*Vir.* [*To Sicinius*] You shall stay too : I  
would I had the power

To say so to my husband.

*Sic.* Are you mankind° ?

*Vol.* Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but 30  
this fool.

Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship<sup>o</sup>  
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome  
Than thou hast spoken words?

*Sic.* O blessed heavens! 35

*Vol.* Moe noble blows than ever thou wise  
words;

And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet  
go:

Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son 40  
Were in Arabia,<sup>o</sup> and thy tribe before him,  
His good sword in his hand.

*Sic.* What then?

*Vir.* What then

He'd make an end of thy posterity. 45

*Men.* Come, come, peace.

*Sic.* I would he had continued to his country  
As he began, and not unknit himself  
The noble knot<sup>o</sup> he made.

*Bru.* I would he had. 50

*Vol.* 'I would he had!' 'Twas you incensed.  
the rabble;

Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth





Leave this faint puling,<sup>o</sup> and lament as I do,  
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

[*Exeunt Vol. and Vir.*

*Men.* Fie, fie, fie!

[*Exit.*

### SCENE III.

*A highway between Rome and Antium.*

*Enter a ROMAN and a VOLSCE, meeting.*

*Rom.* I know you well, sir, and you know me :  
your name, I think, is Adrian.

*Vols.* It is so, sir ; truly, I have forgot you.

*Rom.* I am a Roman ; and my services are, as  
you are, against 'em<sup>o</sup> : know you me yet? 5

*Vols.* Nicanor? no.

*Rom.* The same, sir.

*Vols.* You had more beard when I last saw  
you ; but your favour is well appeared<sup>o</sup> by your  
tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a 10  
note from the Volscian state, to find you out there :  
you have well saved me a day's journey.

*Rom.* There hath been in Rome strange in-  
surrections ; the people against the senators,  
patricians and nobles. 15

*Vols.* Hath been! is it ended then? Our state thinks not so: they are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in the heat of their division.

20 *Rom.* The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing would make it flame again: for the nobles receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take  
 25 all power from the people, and to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out.

*Vols.* Coriolanus banished!

*Rom.* Banished, sir.

30 *Vols.* You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

*Rom.* The day serves well for them<sup>o</sup> now. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being  
 35 now in no request of his country.

*Vols.* He cannot choose.<sup>o</sup> I am most fortunate, thus accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

*Rom.* I shall, between this and supper, tell <sup>40</sup> you most strange things from Rome; all tending to the good of their adversaries. Have you an army ready, say you?

*Vols.* A most royal one; the centurions and their charges, distinctly billeted,<sup>o</sup> already in the <sup>45</sup> entertainment,<sup>o</sup> and to be on foot at an hour's warning.

*Rom.* I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and <sup>50</sup> most glad of your company.

*Vols.* You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause to be glad of yours.

*Rom.* Well, let us go together. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV.

*Antium.* *Before Aufidius's house.*

*Enter CORIOLANUS in mean apparel, disguised and muffled.*

*Cor.* A goodly city is this Antium. City,  
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir

Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars<sup>o</sup>  
 Have I heard groan and drop: then know me  
 5 not;  
 Lest thy wives<sup>o</sup> with spits, and boys with stones,  
 In puny battle slay me.

*Enter a CITIZEN.*

Save you, sir.

*Cit.* And you.

10 *Cor.* Direct me, if it be your will,  
 Where great Aufidius lies: is he in Antium?

*Cit.* He is, and feasts the nobles of the state  
 At his house this night.

*Cor.* Which is his house, beseech you?

15 *Cit.* This, here, before you.

*Cor.* Thank you, sir: farewell.

*[Exit. Citizen.]*

O world,<sup>o</sup> thy slippery turns! Friends now fast  
 sworn,  
 Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,  
 20 Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise  
 Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love  
 Unseparable, shall within this hour,  
 On a dissension of a doit,<sup>o</sup> break out

To bitterest enmity : so, fellest foes,  
 Whose passions and whose plots have broke their 25  
     sleep  
 To take° the one the other, by some chance,  
 Some trick° not worth an egg, shall grow dear  
     friends  
 And interjoin their issues.° So with me : 30  
 My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon  
 This enemy town. I'll enter : if he slay me,  
 He does fair justice ; if he give me way,°  
 I'll do his country service. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

*The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.*

*Music within. Enter a SERVINGMAN.*

*First Serv.* Wine, wine, wine ! — What service  
 is here ! I think our fellows are asleep. [*Exit.*

*Enter another SERVINGMAN.*

*Sec. Serv.* Where's Cotus° ? my master calls  
 for him. Cotus ! [*Exit.*

*Enter CORIOLANUS.*

5 *Cor.* A goodly house: the feast smells well;  
but I  
Appear not like a guest.°

*Re-enter the first SERVINGMAN.*

*First Serv.* What would you have, friend?  
whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray,  
10 go to the door. [*Exit.*

*Cor.* I have deserved no better entertainment,  
In being Coriolanus.°

*Re-enter second SERVINGMAN.*

*Sec. Serv.* Whence are you, sir? Has the  
porter his eyes in his head, that he gives en-  
15 trance to such companions°? Pray, get you  
out.

*Cor.* Away!

*Sec. Serv.* 'Away!' get you away.

*Cor.* Now thou'rt troublesome.

20 *Sec. Serv.* Are you so brave? I'll have you  
talked with anon.

*Enter a third SERVINGMAN. The first meets him.*

*Third Serv.* What fellow's this?

*First Serv.* A strange one as ever I looked on :  
I cannot get him out o' the house : prithee, call  
my master to him. [Retires. 25

*Third Serv.* What have you to do here, fellow?  
Pray you, avoid<sup>o</sup> the house.

*Cor.* Let me but stand ; I will not hurt your  
hearth.

*Third Serv.* What are you? 30

*Cor.* A gentleman.

*Third Serv.* A marvellous poor<sup>o</sup> one.

*Cor.* True, so I am.

*Third Serv.* Pray you, poor gentleman, take  
up some other station ; here's no place for you ; 35  
pray you, avoid : come.

*Cor.* Follow your function, go, and batten<sup>o</sup> on  
cold bits. [Pushes him away from him.

*Third Serv.* What, you will not ? Prithee, tell  
my master what a strange guest he has here. 40

*Sec. Serv.* And I shall. [Exit.

*Third Serv.* Where dwell'st thou ?

*Cor.* Under the canopy.<sup>o</sup>

*Third Serv.* Under the canopy !

45 *Cor.* Ay.

*Third Serv.* Where's that?

*Cor.* I' the city of kites and crows.

*Third Serv.* I' the city of kites and crows!

What an ass it is! Then thou dwell'st with daws<sup>o</sup>

50 too?

*Cor.* No, I serve not thy master.

*Third Serv.* How, sir! do you meddle with my  
master<sup>o</sup>?

*Cor.* Thou pratest, and pratest; serve with  
55 thy trencher, hence!

*[Beats him away. Exit third Servingman.]*

*Enter AUFIDIUS with the second SERVINGMAN.*

*Auf.* Where is this fellow?

*Sec. Serv.* Here, sir: I'd have beaten him like  
a dog, but for disturbing the lords within.

*[Retires.]*

*Auf.* Whence comest thou? what wouldst  
60 thou? thy name?

Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy  
name?

*Cor.* *[Unmuffling]* If, Tullus,  
Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not



Think me for the man I am, necessity 65  
 Commands me name myself.

*Auf.* What is thy name?

*Cor.* A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,  
 And harsh in sound to thine.

*Auf.* Say, what's thy name? 70

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face  
 Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,  
 Thou show'st a noble vessel: what's thy name°?

*Cor.* Prepare thy brow to frown: — know'st  
 thou me yet? 75

*Auf.* I know thee not: — thy name?

*Cor.* My name is Caius Marcius, who hath  
 done

To thee particularly, and to all the Volscs,  
 Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may 80

My surname, Coriolanus: the painful service,  
 The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood  
 Shed for my thankless country, are requited  
 But with that surname; a good memory,°

And witness of the malice and displeasure 85  
 Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name  
 remains:

The cruelty and envy of the people,

Permitted by our dastard nobles,<sup>o</sup> who  
 90 Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest ;  
 And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be  
 Hoop'd<sup>o</sup> out of Rome. Now, this extremity  
 Hath brought me to thy hearth : not out of  
     hope —  
 95 Mistake me not — to save my life, for if  
 I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world  
 I would have 'voided thee ; but in mere spite,  
 To be full quit of<sup>o</sup> those my banishers,  
 Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast  
 100 A heart of wreak<sup>o</sup> in thee, thou wilt revenge  
 Thine own particular wrongs, and stop those  
     maims  
 Of shame<sup>o</sup> seen through thy country, speed thee  
     straight,  
 105 And make my misery serve thy turn : so use it  
 That my revengeful services may prove  
 As benefits to thee ; for I will fight  
 Against my canker'd<sup>o</sup> country with the spleen<sup>o</sup>  
 Of all the under fiends. But if so be  
 110 Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more  
     fortunes  
 Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am

Longer to live most weary, and present  
 My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice ;  
 Which not to cut would show thee but a fool, 115  
 Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,  
 Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,  
 And cannot live but to thy shame, unless  
 It be to do thee service.

*Auf.* O Marcius, Marcius ! 120  
 Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my  
 heart

A root of ancient envy.° If Jupiter  
 Should from yond cloud speak divine things,  
 And say "'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more 125  
 Than thee all noble Marcius. Let me twine  
 Mine arms about that body, where against°  
 My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,  
 And scarr'd° the moon with splinters : here I clip°  
 The anvil of my sword,° and do contest 130  
 As hotly and as nobly with thy love  
 As ever in ambitious strength I did  
 Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,  
 I loved the maid I married ; never man  
 Sigh'd truer breath ; but that I see thee here, 135  
 Thou noble thing ! more dances my rapt heart

Than when I first my wedded mistress saw  
Bestride my threshold.° Why, thou Mars!

I tell thee,

140 We have a power on foot°; and I had purpose  
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,  
Or lose mine arm for't: thou hast beat me out°  
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since  
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;

145 We have been down together in my sleep,  
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat;  
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy

Marcus,

Had we no quarrel else to Rome but that  
150 Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all  
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war  
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
Like a bold flood o'er-beat. O, come, go in,  
And take our friendly senators by the hands,  
155 Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,  
Who am prepared against your territories,  
Though not for Rome itself.

*Cor.* You bless me, gods!

*Auf.* Therefore, most absolute° sir, if thou  
160 wilt have

The leading of thine own revenges, take  
 The one half of my commission, and set down —  
 As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st  
 Thy country's strength and weakness — thine  
     own ways; 165

Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,  
 Or rudely visit them in parts remote,  
 To fright them, ere destroy. But come in:  
 Let me commend thee first to those that shall  
 Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes! 170

And more a friend than e'er an enemy;  
 Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand: most  
     welcome!

*[Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius. The two Serv-  
 vingmen come forward.]*

*First Serv.* Here's a strange alteration!

*Sec. Serv.* By my hand, I had thought to have 175  
 stricken him with a cudgel; and yet my mind  
 gave me<sup>o</sup> his clothes made a false report of  
 him.

*First Serv.* What an arm he has! he turned  
 me about with his finger and his thumb, as one 180  
 would set up a top.

*Sec. Serv.* Nay, I knew by his face that there

was something in him : he had, sir, a kind of face, methought, — I cannot tell how to term it.

185 *First Serv.* He had so; looking as it were — Would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

*Sec. Serv.* So did I, I'll be sworn : he is simply the rarest man i' the world.

190 *First Serv.* I think he is : but a greater soldier than he, you wot one.°

*Sec. Serv.* Who? my master?

*First Serv.* Nay, it's no matter for that.

*Sec. Serv.* Worth six on him.

195 *First Serv.* Nay, not so neither : but I take him to be the greater soldier.°

*Sec. Serv.* Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that : for the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

200 *First Serv.* Ay, and for an assault too.

*Re-enter third SERVINGMAN.*

*Third Serv.* O slaves, I can tell you news; news, you rascals!

*First and Sec. Serv.* What, what, what? let's partake.

*Third Serv.* I would not be a Roman, of all <sup>205</sup> nations; I had as lieve be a condemned man.

*First and Sec. Serv.* Wherefore? wherefore?

*Third Serv.* Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general, Caius Marcius.

*First Serv.* Why do you say, thwack our <sup>210</sup> general?

*Third Serv.* I do not say, thwack our general; but he was always good enough for him.

*Sec. Serv.* Come, we are fellows and friends he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him <sup>215</sup> say so himself.

*First Serv.* He was too hard for him directly to say the troth on't: before Corioli he scotched<sup>o</sup> him and notched him like a carbonado.<sup>o</sup>

*Sec. Serv.* An he had been cann bally given,<sup>o</sup> <sup>220</sup> he might have broiled and eaten him too.

*First Serv.* But, more of thy news?

*Third Serv.* Why, he is so made on here within as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' the table<sup>o</sup>; no question asked him by any <sup>225</sup> of the senators, but they stand bald before him. Our general himself makes a mistress of him; sanctifies himself with's hand,<sup>o</sup> and turns up the white

o' the eye<sup>o</sup> to his discourse. But the bottom of  
 230 the news is, our general is cut i' the middle, and  
 but one half of what he was yesterday; for the  
 other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the  
 whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl<sup>o</sup> the porter  
 of Rome gates by the ears: he will mow all down  
 235 before him, and leave his passage poll'd.<sup>o</sup>

*Sec. Serv.* And he's as like to do't as any man  
 I can imagine.

*Third Serv.* Do't! he will do't; for, look you,  
 sir, he has as many friends as enemies; which  
 240 friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir,  
 show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst  
 he's in directitude.<sup>o</sup>

*First Serv.* Directitude! what's that?

*Third Serv.* But when they shall see, sir, his  
 245 crest up again and the man in blood,<sup>o</sup> they will  
 out of their burrows, like conies<sup>o</sup> after rain, and  
 revel all with him.

*First Serv.* But when goes this forward?

*Third Serv.* To-morrow; to-day; presently:  
 250 you shall have the drum struck up this afternoon:  
 'tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be  
 executed ere they wipe their lips.



*Sec. Serv.* Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers. 255

*First Serv.* Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible,<sup>o</sup> and full of vent.<sup>o</sup> Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy, mull'd, deaf, sleepy, insensible. 260

*Sec. Serv.* 'Tis so.

*First Serv.* Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

*Third Serv.* Reason; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I 265 hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising.

*First and Sec. Serv.* In, in, in, in! [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE VI.

*Rome. A Public Place.*

*Enter the two TRIBUNES, SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

*Sic.* We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;

His remedies are tame i' the present peace  
 And quietness of the people, which before  
 5 Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends  
 Blush that the world goes well; who rather had,  
 Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold  
 Dissentious numbers pestering<sup>o</sup> streets than see  
 Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going  
 10 About their functions friendly.

*Bru.* We stood to't in good time.

*Enter MENENIUS.*

Is this Menenius?

*Sic.* 'Tis he, 'tis he: O, he is grown most kind  
 Of late. Hail, sir!

15 *Men.* Hail to you both!

*Sic.* Your Coriolanus is not much miss'd,  
 But with his friends: the commonwealth doth  
 stand;

And so would do, were he more angry at it.

20 *Men.* All's well; and might have been much  
 better, if

He could have temporized.

*Sic.* Where is he, hear you?

*Men.* Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and  
his wife 25  
Hear nothing from him.

*Enter three or four CITIZENS.*

*Citizens.* The gods preserve you both!

*Sic.* God-den,<sup>o</sup> our neighbours.

*Bru.* God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

*First Cit.* Ourselves, our wives, and children, 30  
on our knees,

Are bound to pray for you both.

*Sic.* Live, and thrive!

*Bru.* Farewell, kind neighbours: we wish'd  
Coriolanus 35

Had loved you as we did.

*Citizens.* Now the gods keep you!

*Both Tri.* Farewell, farewell. [*Exeunt Citizens.*]

*Sic.* This is a happier and more comely time  
Than when these fellows ran about the streets, 40  
Crying confusion.<sup>o</sup>

*Bru.* Caius Marcius was  
A worthy officer i' the war, but insolent,  
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,  
Self-loving, — 45

*Sic.* And affecting one sole throne;<sup>o</sup>  
Without assistance.

*Men.* I think not so.

*Sic.* We should by this, to all our lamentation,<sup>o</sup>  
50 If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

*Bru.* The gods have well prevented it, and  
Rome  
Sits safe and still<sup>o</sup> without him.

*Enter an ÆDILE.*

*Æd.* Worthy tribunes,  
55 There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,<sup>o</sup>  
Reports, the Volsces with two several powers  
Are enter'd in the Roman territories,  
And with the deepest malice of the war  
Destroy what lies before 'em.

60 *Men.* 'Tis Aufidius,  
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,  
Thrusts forth his horns<sup>o</sup> again into the world;  
Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood<sup>o</sup> for  
Rome,  
65 And durst not once peep out

*Sic.* Come, what talk you  
Of Marcius?

*Bru.* Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It  
cannot be  
The Volsces dare break with us. 70

*Men.* Cannot be!  
We have record that very well it can,  
And three examples of the like have been  
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,  
Before you punish him, where he heard this, 75  
Lest you shall chance to whip your information,<sup>o</sup>  
And beat the messenger who bids beware  
Of what is to be dreaded.

*Sic.* Tell not me:  
I know this cannot be. 80

*Bru.* Not possible.

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Mess.* The nobles in great earnestness are  
going  
All to the senate-house: some news is come  
That turns their countenances. 85

*Sic.* 'Tis this slave;  
Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes: his raising<sup>o</sup>;  
Nothing but his report.

*Mess.* Yes, worthy sir;

90 The slave's report is seconded; and more,  
More fearful, is deliver'd.°

*Sic.* What more fearful?

*Mess.* It is spoke freely out of many mouths—  
How probable I do not know — that Marcius,  
95 Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,  
And vows revenge as spacious as between  
The young'st and oldest thing.°

*Sic.* This is most likely!

*Bru.* Raised only, that the weaker sort may  
100 wish  
Good° Marcius home again.

*Sic.* The very trick on't.

*Men.* This is unlikely.  
He and Aufidius can no more atone°  
105 Than violentest contrariety.

*Enter a second MESSENGER.*

*Sec. Mess.* You are sent for to the senate:  
A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius  
Associated with Aufidius, rages  
Upon our territories; and have already  
110 O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took  
What lay before them.

*Enter* COMINIUS.

*Com.* O, you have made good work!

*Men.* What news? what news?

*Com.* You have help to ravish your own  
daughters, and 115

To melt the city leads<sup>o</sup> upon your pates;

To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses, —

*Men.* What's the news? what's the news?

*Com.* Your temples burned in their cement,  
and 120

Your franchises, whereon you stood,<sup>o</sup> confined

Into an auger's bore.<sup>o</sup>

*Men.* Pray now, your news? —

You have made fair work, I fear me. — Pray, your  
news? — 125

If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians, —

*Com.* If!

He is their god: he leads them like a thing

Made by some other deity than nature,

That shapes man better; and they follow him, 130

Against us brats, with no less confidence

Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,

Or butchers killing flies.

*Men.* You have made good work,

135 You and your apron-men<sup>o</sup>; you that stood so  
much

Upon the voice of occupation<sup>o</sup> and  
The breath of garlic-eaters<sup>o</sup>!

*Com.* He'll shake your Rome about your ears.

140 *Men.* As Hercules  
Did shake down mellow fruit.<sup>o</sup> You have made  
fair work!

*Bru.* But is this true, sir?

*Com.* Ay; and you'll look pale  
145 Before you find it other. All the regions  
Do smilingly<sup>o</sup> revolt; and who resist  
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,  
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame  
him?

150 Your enemies and his find something in him.

*Men.* We are all undone, unless  
The noble man have mercy.

*Com.* Who shall ask it?  
The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people  
155 Deserve such pity of him as the wolf  
Does of the shepherds: for his best friends, if they  
Should say 'Be good to Rome,' they charged<sup>o</sup>  
him even



As those should do that had deserved his hate,  
And therein show'd like enemies. 165

*Men.* 'Tis true :

If he were putting to my house the brand  
That should consume it, I have not the face  
To say 'Beseech you, cease.' You have made  
fair hands,° 165

You and your crafts! you have crafted fair!

*Com.* You have brought  
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never  
So incapable of help.

*Both Tri.* Say not, we brought it. 170

*Men.* How! was it we? we loved him; but,  
like beasts

And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,°  
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

*Com.* But I fear 175

They'll roar him in again.° Tullus Aufidius,  
The second name of men, obeys his points°  
As if he were his officer: desperation  
Is all the policy, strength and defence,  
That Rome can make against them. 180

*Enter a troop of* CITIZENS.

*Men.* Here come the clusters.  
 And is Aufidius with him<sup>o</sup>? You are they  
 That made the air unwholesome, when you cast  
 Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at  
 185 Coriolanus' exile. Now, he's coming;  
 And not a hair upon a soldier's head  
 Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs<sup>o</sup>  
 As they threw caps up will he tumble down,  
 And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;  
 190 If he could burn us all into one coal,  
 We have deserved it.

*Citizens.* Faith, we hear fearful news.

*First Cit.* For mine own part,  
 When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity.

195 *Sec. Cit.* And so did I.

*Third Cit.* And so did I; and, to say the truth,  
 so did very many of us: that we did, we did for  
 the best; and though we willingly consented to  
 his banishment, yet it was against our will.

200 *Com.* Ye're goodly things, you voices!

*Men.* You have made  
 Good work, you and your cry<sup>o</sup>! Shall's to the  
 Capitol?

*Com.* O, ay, what else?

[*Exeunt Cominius and Menenius.*]

*Sic.* Go, masters, get you home; be not dis- 205  
may'd:

These are a side that would be glad to have  
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,  
And show no sign of fear.

*First Cit.* The gods be good to us! Come, 210  
masters, let's home. I ever said we were i' the  
wrong when we banished him.

*Sec. Cit.* So did we all.<sup>o</sup> But, come, let's  
home. [Exeunt Citizens.

*Bru.* I do not like this news. 215

*Sic.* Nor I.

*Bru.* Let's to the Capitol: would half my  
wealth

Would buy this for a lie!

*Sic.* Pray, let us go. [Exeunt. 220

## SCENE VII.

*A camp, a small distance from Rome.*

*Enter AUFIDIUS with his LIEUTENANT.*

*Auf.* Do they still fly to the Roman?

*Lieu.* I do not know what witchcraft's in him,  
but

Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,  
 5 Their talk at table and their thanks at end ;  
 And you are darken'd in this action, sir,  
 Even by your own.°

*Auf.* I cannot help it now,  
 Unless, by using means, I lame the foot  
 10 Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,  
 Even to my person, than I thought he would  
 When first I did embrace him : yet his nature  
 In that's no changeling ; and I must excuse  
 What cannot be amended.

15 *Lieu.* Yet I wish, sir —  
 I mean for your particular° — you had not  
 Join'd in commission with him ; but either  
 Had borne the action of yourself, or else  
 To him had left it solely.

20 *Auf.* I understand thee well ; and be thou sure,  
 When he shall come to his account, he knows not  
 What I can urge against him.° Although it  
 seems,  
 And so he thinks, and is no less apparent  
 25 To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,  
 And shows good husbandry for the Volscian  
 state,

Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon  
 As draw his sword, yet he hath left undone  
 That which shall break his neck or hazard mine, 30  
 Whene'er we come to our account.

*Lieu.* Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry  
 Rome?

*Auf.* All places° yield to him ere he sits down ;  
 And the nobility of Rome are his : 35  
 The senators and patricians love him too :  
 The tribunes are no soldiers ; and their people  
 Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty  
 To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome  
 As is the osprey° to the fish, who takes it 40  
 By sovereignty of nature. First he was  
 A noble servant to them ; but he could not  
 Carry his honours even° : whether 'twas pride,°  
 Which out of daily fortune ever taints  
 The happy man° ; whether defect of judgment, 45  
 To fail in the disposing of those chances  
 Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,  
 Not to be other than one thing, not moving  
 From the casque to the cushion, but commanding  
 peace 50  
 Even with the same austerity and garb°

As he controll'd the war; but one of these —  
 As he hath spices° of them all, not all,°

For I dare so far free him — made him fear'd,  
 55 So hated, and so banish'd: but he has a merit,  
 To choke it in the utterance.° So our virtues  
 Lie in the interpretation of the time;  
 And power, unto itself most commendable,  
 Hath not a tomb so evident° as a chair°

60 To extol what it hath done.

One fire drives out one fire°; one nail, one nail;  
 Rights by rights fouler,° strengths by strengths  
 do fail.

Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,  
 65 Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou  
 mine. [*Exeunt.*

ACT FIFTH. — SCENE I.

*Rome. A public place.*

*Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS and BRUTUS, the two TRIBUNES, with others.*

*Men.* No, I'll not go : you hear what he<sup>o</sup> hath said

Which was sometime his general, who loved him  
In a most dear particular.<sup>o</sup> He call'd me father :  
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him ; 5  
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee<sup>o</sup>  
The way into his mercy : nay, if he coy'd<sup>o</sup>  
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

*Com.* He would not seem to know me.

*Men.* Do you hear? 10

*Com.* Yet one time he did call me by my  
name :

I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops  
That we have bled together. Coriolanus

15 He would not answer to : forbad all names ;  
 He was a kind of nothing, titleless,  
 Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire  
 Of burning Rome.

*Men.* Why, so : you have made good work !  
 20 A pair of tribunes that have rack'd° for Rome,  
 To make coals cheap° : a noble memory !

*Com.* I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon  
 When it was less expected : he replied,  
 It was a bare petition° of a state  
 25 To one whom they had punish'd.

*Men.* Very well :  
 Could he say less ?

*Com.* I offer'd° to awaken his regard  
 For's private friends : his answer to me was,  
 30 He could not stay to pick them in a pile  
 Of noisome musty chaff : he said, 'twas folly,  
 For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,  
 And still to nose° the offence.

*Men.* For one poor grain or two !  
 35 I am one of those ; his mother, wife, his child,  
 And this brave fellow too, we are the grains :  
 You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt  
 Above the moon : we must be burnt for you.



*Sic.* Nay, pray, be patient : if you refuse your  
aid 40

In this so never-needed help,<sup>o</sup> yet do not  
Upbraid's with our distress. But sure, if you  
Would be your country's pleader, your good  
tongue,  
More than the instant<sup>o</sup> army we can make, 45  
Might stop our countryman.

*Men.* No, I'll not meddle.

*Sic.* Pray you, go to him.

*Men.* What should I do ?

*Bru.* Only make trial what your love can do 50  
For Rome, towards Marcius.

*Men.* Well, and say that Marcius  
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,  
Unheard ; what then ?  
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot<sup>o</sup> 55  
With his unkindness ? say't be so ?

*Sic.* Yet your good will  
Must have that thanks from Rome, after the  
measure  
As you intended well.<sup>o</sup> 60

*Men.* I'll undertake't :  
I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip

And hum<sup>o</sup> at good Cominius, much unhearts me.  
He was not taken well<sup>o</sup>; he had not dined:

65 The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then  
We pout upon the morning, are unapt  
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd  
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood  
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls  
70 Than in our priest-like fasts: therefore I'll watch  
him

Till he be dieted to my request,<sup>o</sup>  
And then I'll set upon him.

*Bru.* You know the very road into his kind-  
75 ness,  
And cannot lose your way.

*Men.* Good faith, I'll prove him,  
Speed<sup>o</sup> how it will. I shall ere long have knowl-  
edge

80 Of my success. [Exit.

*Com.* He'll never hear him.

*Sic.* Not?

*Com.* I tell you, he does sit in gold,<sup>o</sup> his eye  
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury<sup>o</sup>  
85 The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;  
'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise;' dismiss'd me

Thus, with his speechless hand : what he would  
do,

He sent in writing after me ; what he would not,  
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions :<sup>o</sup> 90

So that all hope is vain,

Unless his noble mother, and his wife ;

Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him

For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,

And with our fair entreaties haste them on. 95

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*Entrance to the Volscian camp before Rome.*

*Two Sentinels on guard.*

*Enter to them, MENENIUS.*

*First Sen.* Stay : whence are you ?

*Sec. Sen.* Stand, and go back.

*Men.* You guard like men ; 'tis well : but, by  
your leave,

I am an officer of state, and come

To speak with Coriolanus. 5

*First Sen.* From whence?

*Men.* From Rome.

*First Sen.* You may not pass, you must re-  
 10 turn : our general  
 Will no more hear from thence.

*Sec. Sen.* You'll see your Rome embraced with  
 fire, before

You'll speak with Coriolanus.

15 *Men.* Good my friends,°  
 If you have heard your general talk of Rome,  
 And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks°  
 My name hath touch'd your ears : it is Menenius.°

*First Sen.* Be it so ; go back : the virtue of  
 20 your name  
 Is not here passable.

*Men.* I tell thee, fellow,  
 Thy general is my lover° : I have been  
 The book of his good acts, whence men have read  
 25 His fame unparallel'd haply amplified ;  
 For I have ever verified° my friends, •  
 Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity  
 Would without lapsing suffer : nay, sometimes,  
 Like to a bowl upon a subtle° ground,  
 30 I have tumbled past the throw,° and in his praise

Have almost stamp'd the leasing<sup>o</sup>: therefore,  
fellow,

I must have leave to pass.

*First Sen.* Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in your <sup>35</sup> own, you should not pass here; no, though it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely. Therefore go back.

*Men.* Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always factionary on the party<sup>o</sup> of your <sup>40</sup> general.

*Sec. Sen.* Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say, you cannot pass. Therefore go back. 45

*Men.* Has he dined, canst thou tell? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

*First Sen.* You are a Roman, are you?

*Men.* I am, as thy general is.

*First Sen.* Then you should hate Rome, as he <sup>50</sup> does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front<sup>o</sup> his revenges with the easy<sup>o</sup> groans

55 of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant<sup>o</sup> as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this?  
 60 No, you are deceived; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you are condemned; our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

*Men.* Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, 65 he would use me with estimation.

*First Sen.* Come, my captain knows you not.

*Men.* I mean, thy general.

*First Sen.* My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half-pint<sup>o</sup>  
 70 of blood; — back, — that's the utmost of your having: — back.

*Men.* Nay, but, fellow, fellow, —

*Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.*

*Cor.* What's the matter?

*Men.* Now, you companion,<sup>o</sup> I'll say an  
 75 errand<sup>o</sup> for you: you shall know now that I am in estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack

guardant<sup>o</sup> cannot office me<sup>o</sup> from my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my entertainment<sup>o</sup> with him, if thou standest not i' the state of hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship and 85  
 crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee. The glorious gods sit in hourly synod<sup>o</sup> about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does! O my son, 85  
 my son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, here's water<sup>o</sup> to quench it. I was hardly<sup>o</sup> moved to come to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs; and conjure thee to par- 90  
 don Rome and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here, — this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

*Cor.* Away!

95

*Men.* How! away!

*Cor.* Wife, mother, child, I know not. My  
 affairs

Are servanted<sup>o</sup> to others: though I owe  
 My revenge properly,<sup>o</sup> my remission lies

100

In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,  
 Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison rather  
 Than pity note how much.° Therefore be gone.  
 Mine ears against your suits are stronger than  
 105 Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved  
 thee,

Take this along; I writ it for thy sake,  
 And would have sent it. [*Gives him a letter.*]

Another word, Menenius,  
 110 I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,  
 Was my beloved in Rome: yet thou behold'st.  
*Auf.* You keep a constant temper.°

[*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius.*]

*First Sen.* Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

*Sec. Sen.* 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power:  
 115 you know the way home again.

*First Sen.* Do you hear how we are shent° for  
 keeping your greatness back?

*Sec. Sen.* What cause, do you think, I have to  
 swoon?

120 *Men.* I neither care for the world nor your  
 general: for such things as you, I can scarce  
 think there's any, ye're so slight.° He that hath  
 a will to die by himself° fears it not from another:



let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and your misery increase with your age! I say to you as I was said to, away!

[*Exit.*

*First Sen.* A noble fellow,° I warrant him.

*Sec. Sen.* The worthy fellow is our general: he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken.

[*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.

*The tent of Coriolanus.*

*Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others.*

*Cor.* We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow

Set down our host. My partner in this action,  
You must report to the Volscian lords how plainly°  
I have borne this business. 5

*Auf.* Only their ends  
You have respected; stopp'd your ears against  
The general suit of Rome; never admitted  
A private whisper, no, not with such friends  
That thought them sure of you. 10

*Cor.* This last old man,  
 Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,  
 Loved me above the measure of a father,  
 Nay, godded° me indeed. Their latest refuge  
 15 Was to send him; for whose old love I have,  
 Though I show'd° sourly to him, once more offer'd  
 The first conditions, which they did refuse  
 And cannot now accept; to grace him° only  
 That thought he could do more, a very little  
 20 I have yielded to: fresh embassies and suits,  
 Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter  
 Will I lend ear to. [*Shout within.*] Ha! what  
 shout is this?  
 Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow  
 25 In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

*Enter in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA  
 leading young MARCIUS, VALERIA, and ATTEND-  
 ANTS.*

My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd  
 mould  
 Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand  
 The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection°!  
 30 All bond and privilege of nature, break!

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

What is that curtsy worth? or those doves' eyes,  
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am  
not

Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows; 35  
As if Olympus<sup>o</sup> to a molehill should  
In supplication nod: and my young boy  
Hath an aspect of intercession, which  
Great nature cries 'Deny not.' Let the Volsces  
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy: I'll never 40  
Be such a gosling to obey instinct; but stand,  
As if a man were author of himself  
And knew no other kin.

*Vir.* My lord and husband!

*Cor.* These eyes are not the same I wore in 45  
Rome.

*Vir.* The sorrow that delivers<sup>o</sup> us thus changed  
Makes you think so.

*Cor.* Like a dull actor now  
I have forgot my part and I am out,<sup>o</sup> 50  
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,<sup>o</sup>  
Forgive my tyranny; but do not say,  
For that 'Forgive our Romans.' O, a kiss  
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!

55 Now, by the jealous queen of heaven,<sup>o</sup> that kiss  
 I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip  
 Hath virgin'd it<sup>o</sup> e'er since. You gods! I prate,  
 And the most noble mother of the world  
 Leave unsaluted: sink, my knee, i' the earth;  
[Kneels.]

60 Of thy deep duty more impression show  
 Than that of common sons.

*Vol.* O, stand up blest!

Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,  
 I kneel before thee, and improperly

65 Show duty, as mistaken all this while  
 Between the child and parent. [Kneels.]

*Cor.* What is this?

Your knees to me? to your corrected<sup>o</sup> son?

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach

70 Fillip<sup>o</sup> the stars; then let the mutinous winds

Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,

Murdering impossibility,<sup>o</sup> to make

What cannot be, slight work.

*Vol.* Thou art my warrior;

75 I help to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

*Cor.* The noble sister of Publicola,

The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle

That's curdied<sup>o</sup> by the frost from purest snow  
And hangs on Dian's<sup>o</sup> temple: dear Valeria!

*Vol.* This is a poor epitome<sup>o</sup> of yours, 80  
Which by the interpretation of full time  
May show like all yourself.

*Cor.* The god of soldiers,<sup>o</sup>  
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform  
Thy thoughts with nobleness, that thou mayst 85  
prove

To shame invulnerable, and stick i' the wars  
Like a great sea-mark,<sup>o</sup> standing every flaw  
And saving those that eye thee!

*Vol.* Your knee,<sup>o</sup> sirrah. 90

*Cor.* That's my brave boy!

*Vol.* Even he, your wife, this lady and myself  
Are suitors to you.

*Cor.* I beseech you, peace:  
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before: 95  
The thing<sup>o</sup> I have forsworn to grant may never  
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me  
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate<sup>o</sup>  
Again with Rome's mechanics: tell me not  
Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not 100  
To allay my rages and revenges with

Your colder reasons.

*Vol.* O, no more, no more!

You have said you will not grant us any thing;

105 For we have nothing else to ask, but that  
Which you deny already: yet we will ask;  
That, if you fail in<sup>o</sup> our request, the blame  
May hang upon your hardness: therefore hear us.

*Cor.* Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark; for  
110 we'll

Hear nought from Rome in private. Your  
request?

*Vol.* Should we be silent and not speak, our  
raiment

115 And state of bodies would bewray<sup>o</sup> what life  
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself  
How more unfortunate than all living women  
Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which  
should

120 Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with  
comforts,

Constrains them weep and shake with fear and  
sorrow;

Making the mother, wife and child, to see

125 The son, the husband and the father, tearing

His country's bowels out. And to poor we  
 Thine enmity's most capital° : thou barr'st us  
 Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort  
 That all but we enjoy ; for how can we,  
 Alas, how can we for our country pray, 130  
 Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,  
 Whereto we are bound ? alack, or we must lose  
 The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,  
 Our comfort in the country. We must find  
 An evident calamity, though we had 135  
 Our wish, which side should win ; for either thou  
 Must, as a foreign recreant, be led  
 With manacles through our streets, or else  
 Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,  
 And bear the palm° for having bravely shed 140  
 Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,  
 I purpose not to wait on fortune till  
 These wars determine° : if I cannot persuade thee  
 Rather to show a noble grace to both parts  
 Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner 145  
 March to assault thy country than to tread —  
 Trust to't, thou shalt not — on thy mother's  
     womb,  
 That brought thee to this world.

150 *Vir.* Ay, and mine,  
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your  
name  
Living to time.

*Boy.* A' shall not tread on me ;  
155 I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

*Cor.* Not of a woman's tenderness to be,  
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.  
I have sat too long. [*Rising.*

*Vol.* Nay, go not from us thus.  
165 If it were so that our request did tend  
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy  
The Volsces whom you serve, you might con-  
demn us,  
As poisonous of your honour : no ; our suit  
165 Is, that you reconcile them : while the Volsces  
May say 'This mercy we have show'd,' the  
Romans,  
'This we received ;' and each in either side  
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry 'Be blest  
170 For making up this peace !' Thou know'st,  
great son,  
The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,  
That if thou conquer Rome, the benefit



Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name  
 Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses ; 175  
 Whose chronicle thus writ : 'The man was noble,  
 But with his last attempt he wiped it out,  
 Destroy'd his country, and his name remains  
 To the ensuing age abhorr'd.' Speak to me, son :  
 Thou hast affected<sup>o</sup> the fine strains of honour, 180  
 To imitate the graces of the gods ;  
 To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,  
 And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt  
 That should but rive an oak. Why dost not  
 speak? 185

Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man  
 Still to remember wrongs? Daughter, speak you :  
 He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy :  
 Perhaps thy childishness will move him more  
 Than can our reasons. There's no man in the 190  
 world

More bound to's mother, yet here he lets me prate  
 Like one i' the stocks.<sup>o</sup> Thou hast never in thy  
 life

Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy ; 195  
 When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,  
 Has cluck'd thee to the wars,<sup>o</sup> and safely home,

Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,  
 And spurn me back : but if it be not so,  
 200 Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague  
       thee,

That thou restrain'st from me the duty which  
 To a mother's part belongs. He turns away :  
 Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.

205 To his surname Coriolanus 'long's more pride  
 Than pity to our prayers. Down : an end ;  
 This is the last : so we will home to Rome,  
 And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold's :

210 But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,  
 Does reason our petition with more strength  
 Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go :  
 This fellow had a Volscian to<sup>o</sup> his mother ;  
 His wife is in Corioli, and his child

215 Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch :  
 I am hush'd until our city be a-fire,  
 And then I'll speak a little.

*Cor.* [*After holding her by the hand, silent*] O  
 mother, mother!

220 What have you done? Behold, the heavens do  
       ope,

The gods look down, and this unnatural<sup>o</sup> scene  
 They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!  
 You have won a happy victory to Rome;  
 But, for your son, believe it, O, believe it, 225  
 Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,  
 If not most mortal<sup>o</sup> to him. But let it come.  
 Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,  
 I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,  
 Were you in my stead, would you have heard 230  
 A mother less? or granted less, Aufidius?

*Auf.* I was moved withal.

*Cor.* I dare be sworn you were:  
 And, sir, it is no little thing to make  
 Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir, 235  
 What peace you'll make, advise me: for my  
 part,  
 I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray  
 you,  
 Stand to me in this cause. O mother! wife! 240

*Auf.* [*Aside*] I am glad thou hast set thy  
 mercy and thy honour  
 At difference in thee: out of that I'll work  
 Myself a former fortune.<sup>o</sup>

[*The ladies make signs to Coriolanus.*

245 *Cor.* [*To Volumnia, Virgilia, &c.*] Ay, by  
and by : —

But we will drink together<sup>o</sup>; and you shall bear  
A better witness back than words, which we  
On like conditions will have counter-seal'd.

250 Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve  
To have a temple<sup>o</sup> built you : all the swords  
In Italy, and her confederate arms,  
Could not have made this peace.                    [*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE IV.

*Rome. A public place.*

*Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS.*

*Men.* See you yond coign<sup>o</sup> o' the Capitol, yond  
corner-stone?

*Sic.* Why, what of that?

*Men.* If it be possible for you to displace it  
5 with your little finger, there is some hope the  
ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may pre-  
vail with him. But I say there is no hope in't :  
our throats are sentenced, and stay upon<sup>o</sup> ex-  
ecution.

*Sic.* Is't possible that so short a time can alter <sup>10</sup>  
the condition° of a man?

*Men.* There is differency between a grub and  
a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This  
Marcius is grown from man to dragon: he has  
wings; he's more than a creeping thing. 15

*Sic.* He loved his mother dearly.

*Men.* So did he me: and he no more remem-  
bers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse.  
The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes: when  
he walks, he moves like an engine,° and the <sup>20</sup>  
ground shrinks before his treading: he is able to  
pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell,  
and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state,  
<sup>23</sup> a thing made for° Alexander. What he bids  
be done, is finished with his bidding. He wants <sup>25</sup>  
nothing of a god° but eternity and a heaven to  
throne in.

*Sic.* Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

*Men.* I paint him in the character.° Mark  
what mercy his mother shall bring from him: <sup>30</sup>  
there is no more mercy in him than there is milk  
in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and  
all this is long of° you.

*Sic.* The gods be good unto us!

35 *Men.* No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Mess.* Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your  
40 house:

The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune,  
And hale<sup>o</sup> him up and down, all swearing, if  
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,  
They'll give him death by inches.

*Enter another MESSENGER.*

45 *Sic.* What's the news?

*Sec. Mess.* Good news, good news; the ladies  
have prevail'd,

The Volscians are dislodged, and Marcius gone:  
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,

50 No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.<sup>o</sup>

*Sic.* Friend,

Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?

*Sec. Mess.* As certain as I know the sun is fire:

Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of  
it? 55

Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,<sup>o</sup>  
As the recomforted through the gates. Why,  
hark you!

[*Trumpets; hautboys<sup>o</sup>; drums beat; all together.*

The trumpets, sackbuts<sup>o</sup>, psalteries<sup>o</sup>, and fifes,  
Tabors and cymbals and the shouting Romans, 60  
Make the sun dance.<sup>o</sup> Hark you!

[*A shout within.*

*Men.* This is good news:

I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia  
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,  
A city full; of tribunes, such as you, 65  
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-  
day:

This morning for ten thousand of your throats  
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

[*Music still, with shouts.*

*Sic.* First, the gods bless you for your tidings; 70  
next,

Accept my thankfulness.

*Sec. Mess.* Sir, we have all

Great cause to give great thanks.

75 *Sic.* They are near the city?  
*Sec. Mess.* Almost at point to enter.<sup>o</sup>  
*Sic.* We will meet them,  
 And help the joy. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE V.

*The same. A street near the gate.*

*Enter two SENATORS with VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, &c. passing over the stage, followed by PATRICIANS and others.*

*First Sen.* Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!

Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,  
 And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before  
 5 them:

Unshout<sup>o</sup> the noise that banish'd Marcius,  
 Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;  
 Cry 'Welcome, ladies, welcome!'

*All.* Welcome, ladies,  
 10 Welcome!

*[A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt.]*



## SCENE VI.

*Corioli. A public place.**Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants.*

*Auf.* Go tell the lords o' the city I am here :  
 Deliver them this paper : having read it,  
 Bid them repair to the market-place, where I,  
 Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,  
 Will vouch the truth of it. Him<sup>o</sup> I accuse 5  
 The city ports by this hath enter'd, and  
 Intends to appear before the people, hoping  
 To purge himself with words : dispatch.

*[Exeunt Attendants.]**Enter three or four CONSPIRATORS of AUFIDIUS' faction.*

Most welcome !

*First Con.* How is it with our general? 10*Auf.* Even so

As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,  
 And with his charity slain.

*Sec. Con.* Most noble sir,  
 If you do hold the same intent wherein 15



Presented to my knife his throat: I took him, 40  
 Made him joint-servant with me, gave him way  
 In all his own desires, nay, let him choose  
 Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,  
 My best and freshest men, served his designments  
 In mine own person, help to reap the fame 45  
 Which he did end° all his; and took some pride  
 To do myself this wrong: till at the last  
 I seem'd his follower, not partner, and  
 He waged me° with his countenance, as if  
 I had been mercenary.° 50

*First Con.* So he did, my lord:  
 The army marvell'd at it, and in the last  
 When he had carried Rome and that we look'd  
 For no less spoil than glory —

*Auf.* There was it: 55  
 For which my sinews° shall be stretch'd upon  
 him.

At a few drops of women's rheum,° which are  
 As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour  
 Of our great action: therefore shall he die, 60  
 And I'll renew me in his fall. But hark!  
 [Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of the  
 people.]



What faults he made before the last, I think  
 Might have found easy fines : but there to end 85  
 Where he was to begin, and give away  
 The benefit of our levies, answering us  
 With our own charge,<sup>o</sup> making a treaty where  
 There was a yielding, — this admits no excuse.

*Auf.* He approaches : you shall hear him. 90

*Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and  
 colours ; the commoners being with him.*

*Cor.* Hail, lords !<sup>o</sup> I am return'd your soldier ;  
 No more infected with my country's love  
 Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting  
 Under your great command. You are to know,  
 That prosperously I have attempted, and 95  
 With bloody passage led your wars even to  
 The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought  
 home

Do more than counterpoise a full third part<sup>o</sup>  
 The charges of the action. We have made peace, 100  
 With no less honour to the Antiates  
 Than shame to the Romans : and we here deliver,  
 Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,  
 Together with the seal o' the senate, what



*Auf.* No more.°

*Cor.* Measureless liar, thou hast made my <sup>130</sup>  
heart

Too great for what contains it. ‘Boy!’ O slave!  
Pardon me, lords, ’tis the first time° that ever  
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave  
lords, 135

Must give this cur the lie : and his own notion°—  
Who wears my stripes impress’d upon him ; that  
Must bear my beating to his grave — shall join  
To thrust the lie unto him.

*First Lord.* Peace, both, and hear me speak. <sup>140</sup>

*Cor.* Cut me to pieces, Volsces ; men and  
lads,

Stain all your edges on me. ‘Boy!’ false hound!  
If you have writ your annals true, ’tis there,  
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I 145  
Flutter’d your Volscians in Corioli ;  
Alone I did it. ‘Boy!’

*Auf.* Why, noble lords,  
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,  
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart, <sup>150</sup>  
’Fore your own eyes and ears?

*All Consp.*

Let him die for’t.

*All the People.* 'Tear him to pieces.' 'Do it presently.'<sup>o</sup> 'He killed my son.' 'My daughter.' 'He killed my cousin Marcus.' 'He killed my father.'

*Sec. Lord.* Peace, ho! no outrage: peace!  
The man is noble, and his fame folds-in<sup>o</sup>  
This orb o' the earth. His last offences to us  
165 Shall have judicious<sup>o</sup> hearing. Stand, Aufidius,  
And trouble not the peace.

*Cor.* O that I had him,  
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,  
To use my lawful sword!

165 *Auf.* Insolent villain!

*All Consp.* Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[*The Conspirators draw, and kill Coriolanus:*  
*Aufidius stands on his body.*

*Lords.* Hold, hold, hold, hold!

*Auf.* My noble masters, hear me speak.

*First Lord.* O Tullus,—

170 *Sec. Lord.* Thou hast done a deed whereat  
valour will weep.

*Third Lord.* Tread not upon him. Masters  
all, be quiet;

Put up your swords.



*Auf.* My lords, when you shall know — as in 175  
 this rage  
 Provoked by him, you cannot — the great danger  
 Which this man's life did owe<sup>o</sup> you, you'll rejoice  
 That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours  
 To call me to your senate, I'll deliver 180  
 Myself your loyal servant, or endure  
 Your heaviest censure.

*First Lord.* Bear from hence his body ;  
 And mourn you for him : let him be regarded  
 As the most noble corse that ever herald<sup>o</sup> 185  
 Did follow to his urn.

*Sec. Lord.* His own impatience  
 Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.  
 Let's make the best of it.

*Auf.* My rage is gone, 190  
 And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up :  
 Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers ; I'll be one.  
 Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully :  
 Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he  
 Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one, 195  
 Which to this hour bewail the injury,  
 Yet he shall have a noble memory.

Assist. [*Exeunt, bearing the body of Coriolanus.*

*A dead march sounded.*



# NOTES

## EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL

THE text of this edition follows in the main that used in the Temple Edition. Since the numbering of the lines would in any case vary from other editions in the prose portions of the text, on account of type and length of line differences; and since the inequalities of the poetic lines of the text as we have it suggest variations, the convenience of the pupil has been considered in the line numbering rather than conformity to previous editions.

### ACT I.

As our chief interest lies in the personality of Coriolanus, Shakespeare devotes the first act to portraying the heroic qualities of the leading character. We see the hero as an intrepid warrior, who saves his city when it is attacked by foreign foes, and who then unselfishly refuses to share in the spoils of the victory. We learn that he regards himself as a man of the highest sense of honor, that he is self-sacrificing in his devotion to the state, and that he shows the most "high-bred courtesy"

towards his own class, the patrician. On the other hand, in order that we may see him in his true greatness, the defects and weaknesses in his character are barely hinted at in this act. This is necessary so that his eventual fall may be more deeply tragic.

### SCENE I.

This scene, and the two following, are introductory. They acquaint us with "conditions precedent" to the action of the play, introduce the leading characters, and lead up to the ascending action of the play.

The first scene sets forth the political unrest in Rome, which arose from the growing friction between the patricians and the plebeians. In this antagonism lie the seeds of eventual danger to the city, unless the two parties can be reconciled. Coriolanus, as a leader among the patricians, is not likely to achieve this much-to-be-desired result, for the rabble regards him as "chief enemy to the people." At the same time, the leaders of the plebeians, the tribunes, are selfish, narrow-minded men, who, likewise, have hardly any of the qualities necessary to statesmanship or successful government. Consequently, it becomes evident at once that misunderstandings will arise, which will lead to conflict between the two parties, more especially between Coriolanus and the tribunes. While the struggle between the two parties is the more important historically, the supreme struggle between Coriolanus and his fate is the more important dramatically. The

class struggle should, therefore, be considered only as a background for this drama of the soul.

8. **Chief enemy.** In this opinion lies the chief interest, and therefore the dramatist states it at once. The First Citizen is opposed to Coriolanus throughout the play and easily persuades the rabble to look at the situation from his viewpoint. Notice, also, that here, as in others of his great tragedies, Shakespeare directs our attention to the central figure before the latter enters.

10. **Corn.** The dearth of corn is given as the chief reason for the unrest of the plebeians although Plutarch mentions two seditions, one on account of the oppression of usurers, and another because of the shortage of corn. The former is merely hinted at in ll. 90-91 of this scene. The second, which occurred after the war with Corioli, resulted in the distribution of corn to the plebeians. This action was opposed by Coriolanus, a fact which is referred to in Act III, Scene i, ll. 65-68.

16. **Good.** Used in the sense of rich. Note the play on the word. **Authority.** Those in authority.

21. **Object.** Sight, spectacle.

22. **Particularize.** Emphasize, point out in detail. **Sufferance.** Suffering.

Lines 17-22 may be paraphrased as follows: "They will not give us, even of their superfluity, for we are too precious to them as we are; our poverty, and the sight of our misery, enable them, by contrast, to realize their own happiness in detail."

24. **Pikes.** Lances or spears in one sense, pitchforks in the other. Note the play on words in "pikes" and "rakes." A well-known proverb was, "As lean as a rake."

27. Observe that the Second Citizen is always inclined to be charitable towards Coriolanus and does not share the animosity of the First Citizen.

29. **Dog.** Lacking in pity, brutal, cruel.

30. **Commonalty.** The plebeians.

34. **Give him good report.** "Speak well of him."

40. **To please his mother.** "But touching Martius, the only thing that made him to love honour, was the joy he saw his mother did take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happy and honourable, as that his mother might hear everybody praise and commend him, that she might always see him with a crown upon his head, and that she might still embrace him with tears running down her cheeks for joy." — PLUTARCH.

41. **To be partly proud.** Partly to be proud. Other examples of such transposition are common in Shakespeare.

42. **Virtue.** Courage, valor. Plutarch says, "Now in those days valiantness was honoured in Rome above all other virtues: which they call *virtus*, by the name of virtue itself, as including . . . all other virtues besides."

45. **Covetous.** Compare this statement with the magnanimity of Coriolanus in Act I, Sc. ix, ll. 46-50, and his contempt for those who prefer pillage to fighting in Act I, Sc. v, ll. 5-12.

48. **Repetition.** Mention, utterance.

50. **Capitol.** "The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, on the Capitoline Hill, where the Senate is represented as being assembled."

54. **Loved the people.** Menenius is a clever, good-natured patrician who is popular with the people because of his affable manner. His sincerity is questionable, but the rabble considers him a true friend. When the plebeians seceded, Plutarch says that the Senate sent as emissaries to treat with them "certain of the pleasantest old men, and the most acceptable to the people among them. Of these Menenius Agrippa was he who was sent for chief man of the message from the Senate."

59. **Bats.** Heavy sticks.

61. The Folios gave this and the succeeding speeches to the Second Citizen. Most modern editors have made the change used here because the First Citizen has been the leader in the attacks on Coriolanus and the patricians.

65. **Strong breaths.** Strong-smelling breaths. Shakespeare often refers to the foul breath of the common people. In *Julius Cæsar*, Cassius says, "The rabblement hooted, . . . and uttered such a deal of stinking breath."

79. **Impediment.** "Hindrance on your part."

81. **Your knees, etc.** "You must fall on your knees and pray to the gods for help rather than bear arms against the state."

84. **Thither . . . you.** "To excesses which fresh sufferings must expiate."

85. **Helms.** Helmsmen, *i.e.* the patricians.

91. **Usurers.** "There grew sedition in the city, because the Senate did favour the rich against the people, who did complain of the sore oppression of usurers, of whom they borrowed money." — PLUTARCH. Cf. note on l. 10.

101. **Stale't a little more.** Make it more stale. The use of an adjective as a verb.

103. **Fob off.** To put aside by deceit or trickery.

110. **Still cupboarding the viand.** Continually storing up food as if putting it into a cupboard.

111. **Where.** Whereas. Often used in this sense.

114. **Mutually participate.** Participating in each other's functions.

115. **Affection.** Inclination, desire.

118. **What answer, etc.** The interest shown, even by the First Citizen, in this fable proves that Menenius knew how to obtain a hearing from the lower classes. He is not in sympathy with them, but instead of openly declaring so, he attempts by a homely illustration to convince them of the error of their ways, and thus conciliate them. He believes in compromise, and flatters himself on his cleverness in meeting such a situation as that which now confronts him.

121. **Lungs.** In Shakespeare's day, the functions of the various organs of the body were not understood as well as they are to-day, and consequently many of the



functions ascribed to various organs by the characters in "Coriolanus" will seem absurd to the modern student. We must bear in mind, however, that medical science was still largely a matter of guesswork, and numerous false theories of the ancients were accepted almost without question. Surgery in England was still in its infancy in Elizabethan days and consisted largely of blood-letting by "leeches" and barbers. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, physicians began to study the "subject" rather than books and began to make strides towards disproving many accepted theories of bodily functions. Perhaps the most important of these was the discovery of the circulation of the blood by William Harvey, which was fully demonstrated by him in a lecture given before the College of Physicians just a week before Shakespeare's death.

It is well to remember that Shakespeare's son-in-law, Dr. Hall, was a famous physician, and, therefore, he may have obtained much of his medical knowledge from the latter. He seems to accept the theory that the heart is the source of the supply of the blood (I, i, 159), and that the veins are filled by nourishment directly (V, i, 65-70). He also holds to the conception of the lungs as the seat of merriment (I, i, 121), an idea that is more fully expressed in *As You Like It*, II, vii, 30, where Jacques says, "My lungs began to crow like chanticleer," etc.

Throughout his plays, Shakespeare uses the word "nerves" to mean sinews and shows that the functions

of the nervous system were entirely unknown to him. In fact, in Act I, Sc. i, l. 159, we might assume that he thought that "the seat of the brain" was in the heart. This supposition seems to be supported by the expression "the counsellor heart" (I, i, 131), but some editors have come to the conclusion that Shakespeare considered the heart as the seat of the emotions and "the kingly-crowned head" as the seat of reason. This idea is still quite prevalent in many everyday expressions and has not been entirely discarded by modern writers even though medical science has rejected it. Lines 186-187 in Sc. i of Act III seem to lend additional support to the belief that he considered the "bosom" as the seat of the feelings as do lines 121-123 in Act IV, Sc. v, where Aufidius says to Coriolanus,

"Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart  
A root of ancient envy."

The angry emotions were, however, thought to have their seat in the spleen, and the word "spleen" is used as synonymous with anger and malice. An example of this is found in Act IV, Sc. v, ll. 107-109, where Coriolanus declares,

"For I will fight  
Against my canker'd country with the spleen  
Of all the under fiends."

123. Look you. Note how Menenius is becoming interested in his treatment of the fable, instead of

keeping the attention of his audience focused on the moral of it.

129. **First Citizen.** Hitherto the First Citizen has spoken in prose, but now as he becomes agitated, he speaks in blank verse. Note that Menenius and the other nobles talk in blank verse throughout this scene.

133. **Muniments.** Defences. Supplies of war. (*Temple Ed.*)

136. **'Fore me.** A very mild oath, probably a shortened form of "God before me" as Chambers suggests. The abuse of God's name in stage plays was forbidden by an Act of Parliament in 1606. Menenius is surprised at the interruption and cannot disguise his vexation.

148. **You'st.** You'll. A provincial form.

150. Case of **me**, and why.

153. **Incorporate.** Forming one body.

160. **The seat of the brain.** See note to line 121.

161. **Cranks and offices.** Winding passages and rooms.

162. **Nerves.** Sinews.

171. **Flour.** In contrast to **bran** in the next line. **Flour** is the *flower* or finest part of the ground grain.

173. The First Citizen recognizes that the belly made a good answer, but demands that Menenius should apply it to the affairs in the Roman state.

185. **Great toe.** Notice how Menenius, when he sees the shallowness of his unconvincing arguments, now singles out his chief heckler for a personal attack.

He has not succeeded in reconciling the patrician and plebeian viewpoints largely because of the shrewdness of his antagonist.

190. **Rascal.** A lean, young deer. Shakespeare, according to Fortesque, seems to have conceived of a "rascal" as "a deer with a great head and a small body, who would neither fight nor run." Such a deer might very likely be in the front of the herd, as the young males and the hinds always move in front while the big stags bring up the rear.

194. **Must have bale.** "Must get the worst of it." Menenius is dissembling no longer as a tactful politician, but is expressing his real opinions now.

199. **Scabs.** A term of abuse. Note the play on the word, and note also its modern use. Coriolanus at his first appearance vindicates the assertion of the First Citizen in line 8, where he is first mentioned. To him, it seems undesirable that the commoners should be doing any thinking whatsoever. They are always hateful to him, but especially so when they form opinions of dissent.

210. **Surer.** To be relied upon.

212. **Your virtue is,** etc. "Your virtue is to speak well of him whom his own offences have subjected to justice; and to rail at those laws by which he whom you praise was punished."

216. **Affections.** See note on line 115.

224. **Your garland.** "Whom you honored with a garland."

230. **Their seeking.** Coriolanus will not even deign to learn of their demands from the plebeians themselves, but prefers to seek information from one of his own class.

238. **Side.** Take sides with.

241. **Feebling.** Treating as feeble.

244. **Ruth.** Pity.

245. **Quarry.** A pile of slaughtered game, often given as a reward to the dogs after the hunt. The meaning is, "I would quarter thousands of these slaves and make them a heap of dead."

247. **Pick.** Pitch, hurl.

249. **Persuaded.** Is this true? Have the citizens been persuaded by the arguments of Menenius or frightened by the insolence of Coriolanus?

256. **Proverbs.** Wright, the Clarendon Press editor, quotes the following comment from Archbishop Trench, *Proverbs and their Lessons*: "In a fastidious age, indeed, and one of false refinement, they may go nearly or quite out of use among the so-called upper classes. 'No gentleman,' says Lord Chesterfield, or 'no man of fashion,' as I think is his exact phrase, 'ever uses a proverb.' And with how fine a touch of nature Shakespeare makes Coriolanus, the man who, with all his greatness, is entirely devoid of all sympathy for the people, to utter his scorn of them in scorn of their proverbs, and of their frequent employment of these."

264. **Generosity.** Nobility. Used in its original Latin sense. *Generosi* were men of noble birth.

266. **Caps.** Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I, ii, 246, "the rabblement . . . threw up their sweaty night caps."

269. **Shouting their emulation.** "Rivalling each other in their shouting."

274. **'S death.** A contraction from "God's death!"  
A mild oath.

277. **Win upon power.** "Get the better of those in power" and then make fresh demands.

286. **Vent our musty superfluity.** Get rid of our superfluity of plebeians who have deteriorated through peace. Cf. this remark with that of Menenius in l. 192.

291. **Put you to it.** A colloquialism meaning "put you to the test." Mark the change in Coriolanus's attitude when he converses with men of his own class.

295. Our attention is at once called to the personal rivalry between Coriolanus and Aufidius.

299. What should *only* modify?

307. **Stand'st out?** Do you stand aside? Will you not join us?

315. **Lead you on.** Cominius leads because he is consul.

319. **Noble Marcius.** Some editors contend that Cominius by this courteous remark, accompanied perhaps with a bow, acknowledges the right of Coriolanus to lead even though as general-in-chief he does so himself. Throughout the remainder of the act, the emphasis is placed on the noble and heroic qualities of Coriolanus.

326. **Your valour, etc.** Plutarch says that when the

sedition was over, the plebeians went bravely forth to battle. What dramatic purpose is served by making them seem cowardly?

330. **Tribunes.** Cf. I. 271. "So Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus were the first Tribunes of the people that were chosen who had only been causers and procurers of this sedition."—PLUTARCH.

334. **Gird.** Jeer, taunt.

336. **Modest moon.** Chaste Diana.

337. **The present wars devour him.** Not to be regarded as an assertion in view of the fears expressed in the remainder of Brutus's words.

351. **Giddy censure.** Thoughtless judgment.

356. **Demerits.** Merits, the Latin meaning.

364. **How the dispatch is made.** "With what form of commission the generals are sent to war."

365. **More than his singularity.** More than his own peculiar disposition, *i.e.* his usual superior attitude.

This brief colloquy between the tribunes shows that they understand Coriolanus quite as little as the latter understands the plebeians. These misunderstandings, in addition to the rivalry of Aufidius, are sources of danger which contain great dramatic possibilities.

## SCENE II.

The action in the first scene revolves about Coriolanus, that of the second about Aufidius, his great rival. The first scene arouses our fears for the safety

of Rome because of the prevailing internal dissension ; the second directs our attention to imminent danger from external war.

Sufficient time must have elapsed since the close of the first scene for the news of the mutiny in Rome to have reached Corioli.

2. **Enter'd in.** Have become acquainted with.

6. **Bodily act.** Accomplishment.

7. **Had circumvention.** Had found the means for circumventing us.

10. **Pressed a power.** Levied an army.

14. **Enemy.** Note the effect of the frequent use of this word.

22. **To answer us.** *I.e.* to meet us in battle.

29. **Take in.** Seize, capture.

34. **For the remove.** For raising the siege.

42. **Sworn.** Aufidius also calls attention to the deadly rivalry existing between Coriolanus and himself. Shakespeare keeps this fact prominently before us so that we may be prepared for the events which follow.

### SCENE III.

This scene, which is mostly Shakespeare's own, is the last of the introductory scenes. As the leading character and his chief opponent have now been introduced, the dramatist brings forward Volumnia, who is to play such an important part in the descending action. As the stern Roman mother she is effec-



tively contrasted with the gentle, timid, but appealing, Virgilia.

This domestic and human scene also serves to relieve the tension produced by the two preceding scenes, which have been so largely concerned with political strife and impending foreign war.

The time interval between this scene and the preceding one is short, merely long enough for the Romans to obtain news from their army in the field. The remaining scenes of this act follow each other in direct succession.

7. **Plucked.** Drew.

15. **Cruel War.** The battle of Lake Regillus.

16. **Brows bound with oak.** "Hereupon, after the battle was won, the Dictator did not forget so noble an act, and, therefore, first of all he crowned Martius with a garland of oaken boughs. For whosoever saveth the life of a Roman, it is a manner among them, to honour him with such a garland." — PLUTARCH.

What military decorations of the present day are given for a similar act of heroism?

31. **Beseech.** I beseech.

32. **Retire myself.** A reflexive use, common in Shakespeare's day.

34. **Hither.** Either here or coming hither.

50. **Bless from.** Preserve from. Notice how Virgilia and Volumnia represent respectively the feminine and masculine types of women.

58. **Manifest housekeepers.** Manifestly stayers at home.

59. **Spot.** Figure, pattern.

68. **Confirmed.** Determined.

69. **Gilded butterfly.** Note that the boy chased no ordinary butterfly, even as he now pursues no commonplace ideal. What butterfly might be referred to?

74. **Mammocked.** Tore it to pieces.

76. **La.** A colloquialism, often used by Shakespeare. Cf. l. 103.

77. **Crack.** A boy (slightly contemptuous).

97. **Moths.** Some editors see a play on words here. "The 'Moths' are the suitors that gathered about Penelope, the word suggesting also her long waiting for the return of Ulysses."

98. **Sensible.** Sensitive.

114. **Nothing.** Not at all.

120. **Disease.** Rob of ease, spoil. **Our better mirth.** "Our mirth which would be better if she would not accompany us."

125. **At a word.** In a word, once for all.

#### SCENE IV.

Throughout the remaining scenes of this act, the dramatist aims to build up a truly heroic figure in the person of Coriolanus. In the crisis at hand, the latter becomes the champion of Rome, who by his dauntless valor twice saves the day, and thereby arouses the city to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. His weaknesses are forgotten for the moment, and betray themselves

only to a keen observer. The dramatist has made him tower so high above his fellows that his later fall through successive blunders may be the more tragic. Aufidius is again brought in as a rival who is destined to play an ever larger part in the life of Coriolanus.

7. **Spoke.** Probably the usual parley before the battle. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, Act V, Sc. i.

13. **Summon the town.** *I.e.* to surrender.

16. **'Larum.** Alarum, call to arms.

21. **Fielded friends.** Friends in the field. *Stage direction.* The Elizabethan stage had an upper gallery or balcony, which would represent in this case the walls or battlements of the city of Corioli.

23. **Aufidius.** Coriolanus's first question concerns his rival. His desire to meet Aufidius seems uppermost in his mind, overshadowing his duties as a commander of the forces of Rome.

29. **Pound us up.** Shut us up as in a pound.

34. **Cloven army.** Cominius had divided his army into two parts: one, of which he took command, advanced towards the enemy in the open field; the other, under the command of Coriolanus and Titus Lartius, he left in camp to resist "those that would make any sally out of the city against them."

43. **Beyond our thoughts.** "More than we expected."

48. **Contagion of the south.** The south wind is always referred to by Shakespeare as foggy, damp, etc. Does this invective seem deserved? Note how Corio-

lanus looms up as a hero against the background of such evident cowardice. His agitation shows itself also in the choppy sentences.

59. **Agued.** Like an ague in effect.

70. **Fool-hardiness.** Note the dramatic purpose of this remark.

73. **To the pot.** Cf. the current slang phrase, "gone to pot."

81. **Sensibly outdares, etc.** "Who, though possessed of feeling, outdares his sword which has none."

86. **Cato's wish.** "For he was even such another as Cato would have a soldier and captain to be, not only terrible and fierce to lay about him, but to make the enemy afeard with the sound of his voice, and grimness of his countenance." — PLUTARCH. An anachronism, because Cato lived two centuries later.

93. **Make remain alike.** "Share the same fate."

#### SCENE V.

The common soldiers have already shown themselves cowardly while their leader was performing prodigious feats of valor; this contrast is heightened when they turn to looting as soon as an opportunity affords itself, while Coriolanus disdains to stoop to so base a practice. As the Second Citizen said in Scene i, Coriolanus is not "covetous"; at least, not of material wealth.

3. **A murrain.** An imprecation common in Elizabethan days. The murrain was the bubonic plague.

5. **Movers.** Ironical, meaning loafers in search for plunder.

7. **Drachma.** A silver Greek coin worth about twenty cents.

8. **Of a doit.** Worth half a farthing.

9. **Wore them.** Hangmen were entitled to the garments of those they executed.

17. **Make good.** Hold, defend.

26. **Physical.** Like physic or medicine and, therefore, wholesome.

27. **To Aufidius.** Notice the constant reminder of his desire to meet Aufidius face to face in combat.

34. **Than those.** That is, than the friend of those, etc.

#### SCENE VI.

7. **Conveying gusts.** "Now and then as gusts conveyed the noise."

22. **Not a mile.** Compare Sc. iv, l. 15. **Briefly.** A short while ago.

24. **Confound.** Spend, waste.

43. **Clip.** Clasp, embrace.

50. **Ransoming him or pitying.** Releasing one for a ransom or not demanding any because of pity.

54. **Let slip at will.** The slips or cords by which greyhounds were held at a hunt were so constructed that they could be let loose at will. Is this speech rather too boastful?

62. **The common file, etc.** Note how incoherent the remarks of Coriolanus become when he recalls the behavior of "the common file" which he led into battle.

He evidently meant to say, "Had it not been for the valor of our gentlemen, the common file would have lost us the battle."

74. **Battle.** Army drawn up in battle array.

78. **Vaward.** Vanguard. "Those of the Antiates whom they esteemed to be the warlikest men." —

PLUTARCH.

86. **Delay not the present.** "Remain any longer in our present condition of retreat."

87. **Advanced.** Swords and standards were lifted up during an advance.

88. **Prove.** Put to the proof.

97. **If any fear,** etc. "If any fear less for his person than he fears an ill report." Coriolanus here stands forth as a fine type of soldier. Throughout this speech, he voices the highest ideals of the military hero. He now appeals to the better instincts of the "common file," and the response is hearty and immediate.

104. **O, me alone! Make you a sword of me?** This line has been variously interpreted by different editors. The best interpretation seems to be that of Wright, who says: "Coriolanus is taken by surprise at the eagerness with which the soldiers rush forward in answer to his appeal. Instead of waving their swords as he had directed, they make a sword of him. Instead of volunteers coming forward singly, the whole mass would follow Coriolanus only; none would stay behind. When he saw this, he exclaimed, 'Oh, me alone!' and then when they raised him aloft,

‘ Make you a sword of me? ’ brandish me as if I were a sword? ”

112. **As cause will be obeyed.** As occasion shall demand.

113. **Four.** Four subordinate officers whom he will choose to select a party from the volunteers.

117. **You shall divide,** etc. Cominius supplements the emotional appeal of Coriolanus with more practical assurances. Compare the promise of Cassius to Antony in *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 177–178:

“ Your voice shall be as strong as any man’s  
In the dispensing of new dignities.”

#### SCENE VII.

1. **Ports.** Portals or gates.

4. **Centuries.** Companies of a hundred men.

#### SCENE VIII.

The difficulty of effectively representing a battle on the stage is very great. Shakespeare’s method of doing so is to give us glimpses of the action at those parts of the battlefield where some important incidents are taking place. This helps us to get the effect of the bustle and excitement incident to a battle, it keeps us informed of how the battle is progressing, and it creates for us the impression of the passing of time. In Scene viii, the dramatist finally brings together the two leading antagonists in personal conflict and focuses our attention on them solely.

Ancient dramatists did not attempt to represent a battle on the stage, but had some character, sometimes a messenger, sometimes a participant, relate the story of the battle after it was over. Because the audience was required to draw too much on the imagination, that method was hardly as effective as Shakespeare's.

6. **Fame and envy.** Plutarch says, "Tullus did . . . malice and envy him." Some editors, however, construe this expression as an example of hendiadys, and, therefore, to mean, "envied (or hated) fame." Cf. "horn and noise," Act III, Sc. i, l. 138.

10. **Holloa.** Cry hollo! after me, pursue.

15. **Wrench up.** Screw up, exert. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I, Sc. vii, l. 60. "But screw your courage to the sticking place."

17. **Bragged progeny.** Boasted ancestors. The Romans believed themselves to be descendants of the Trojans, of whom Hector was the bravest or "the whip."

20. **Officious . . . seconds.** These words are addressed to his supporters and show his extreme anger at being defeated, especially with superior numbers on his side. They may be freely paraphrased thus: "Officious, but not valiant, in your interference, you have shamed me by seconding me in such a weak manner."

#### SCENE IX.

The action of this scene is placed by Shakespeare upon the day of the battle so that we may observe



Coriolanus more closely when the excitement of the battle has passed. He refuses the rewards commonly coveted by soldiers of his time, and can hardly contain his scorn for those who fight for spoil. He is a typical product of militarism, even in his pretended magnanimity.

5. **Shrug.** That is, incredulously.

7. **Gladly quaked.** Glad to be made to quake.

9. **Fusty.** Mouldy. From O. F. *fusté*, tasting of the cask. On what syllable is *plebeians* accented in this line?

13. **Morsel.** "The fight with Aufidius is but a trifle compared with the taking of Corioli."

19. **Charter.** Privilege, right.

24. **Hath overta'en mine act.** "He that hath accomplished his object, has done just as much as I." Is this speech of Coriolanus to be taken as sincere, or does it indicate a subtler pride in that he does not wish them to consider such deeds as unusual ones for him to perform?

28. **Traducement.** Calumny, slander.

37. **To hear.** When they hear.

38. **Should they not.** That is, "should they not hear themselves remembered."

40. **Tent themselves.** Probe themselves. The meaning of ll. 38-40 is, "If they should not hear themselves remembered, they might well fester because of ingratitude and refuse to be probed except by the probe of death."

48. **Bribe.** Coriolanus again shows his aversion to accepting a material reward for his services. His ideas of military conduct would not permit him to do so.

51-58. **May these . . . the wars.** This is the most perplexing passage in the play and, therefore, has been variously emended and explained. The reading here adopted is that of the First Folio, which seems to be the most satisfactory one. Hudson explains these lines thus: "Martius has been fighting in his country's cause (line 22), and deprecates bribery (line 48) and flattery, which only unfit the soldier for duty. When drums and trumpets on the field of battle shall prove flatterers, well may courts and cities be naught else. When steel loses its power (because the soldier's arm has become effeminate) then let the parasite (who accepts gifts and wins his way by flattery) take the place of the warrior in beginning wars."

56. **Soothing.** Flattery.

60. **Debile.** Weak.

63. **In acclamations hyperbolic.** With exaggerated applause.

64. **Dieted.** Fed up.

68. **Give you truly.** "Estimate your virtues correctly."

70. **Proper.** His own.

74. **Garland.** Probably meaning not the crown of laurel, but merely honor.

80. **Addition.** Title.

86. **To undercrest.** To wear as a crest. A phrase from heraldry, signifying that he would support Cominius's good opinion of him.

92. **The best.** The leading citizens of Corioli. **Articulate.** Enter into negotiations, arrange articles of peace.

99. **Sometime lay.** Lodged at a certain time.

106. **Butcher.** This extravagant remark on the part of Cominius shows how completely Coriolanus has won the hearts of the patricians. From the dramatic standpoint, the man to be released is not important, but the willingness of Cominius to grant even the slightest wish of Coriolanus is very significant.

#### SCENE X.

This scene does not advance the action, but serves to keep Aufidius and the Volscians before us. Although the latter have been defeated, they will again play a large part in the life of the hero, and must therefore be kept in mind. Besides, Aufidius's declaration of undying enmity arouses our sense of expectancy, and creates the necessary feeling of dramatic suspense.

6. **Be that I am.** Be satisfied to be a defeated man.

7. **Good condition.** In the double sense of good terms and good character. The pun is ironical.

14. **Mine emulation,** etc. Coleridge made the following comment on these words: "I have such deep faith in Shakespeare's heart-lore, that I take it for granted that this is in nature, and not a mere anomaly ;

although I cannot in myself discover any germ of possible feeling which could wax and unfold itself into such a sentiment as this. However, I presume that in this speech is meant to be contained a prevention of shock at the after-change in Aufidius's character."

15. **Where.** Whereas.

18. **Or wrath or craft may get him.** "So that either my wrath or my craft may get him."

26. **Embarquements.** Restraints, hindrances.

29. **Upon my brother's guard.** With my brother as his guard.

30. **The hospitable canon.** The sacred law of hospitality.

36. **Attended.** Waited for.

38. **The city mills.** A bit of detail added by Shakespeare and of which there is no mention in Plutarch, but which adds "an air of truth." There were mills close to the Globe Theatre.

38-40. Let me hear the condition of things that I may adapt my course accordingly.

## ACT II.

The chief purpose in the second act is to reveal more fully the ingrained weaknesses of the character of Coriolanus by placing him in situations where they will at once become apparent. Just as the first act showed us his nobility of character when he defended

his country and its people against the aggression of a foreign foe, so this act discloses his lack of sympathy for one class of people in the state, and his inability to understand their viewpoint when domestic problems call for solution. These deficiencies have been hinted at before, but they are now fully revealed when Coriolanus essays the difficult rôle of politician. Although he tries to hide his sovereign contempt for the plebeians for the time being, his overweening pride soon asserts itself, and, in canvassing for the consulship, he soon loses by his arrogant manner and his surly language the temporary popularity which he had gained by his bravery.

#### SCENE I.

This scene serves to prepare the way for the transition from military to civil affairs. We are informed of the state of affairs in Rome now that the war is over, and are shown the contrast between the welcome which Coriolanus receives from the patricians and that which is given him by the plebeians. Adherents of autocratic rule have always resorted to wars to pacify the masses, whether the latter have demanded bread or a larger share in the government. The Roman patricians followed this traditional custom with the usual result, — they have smothered, but not extinguished, the fires of discontent. The hostility between the two classes is as irreconcilable as that between the tribunes and Coriolanus.

25. **Censured.** Estimated, regarded.

26. **The right-hand file.** The place of honor to military men has always been the right of the line, and accordingly, a captain always placed his choicest and best men in the right-hand files of his company. A file in the sixteenth century consisted of ten men. Menenius here refers to the patricians. Cf. "The common file," Act I, Sc. vi, l. 61.

32. **A very little thief of occasion.** Any trifling provocation.

40. **Single.** Simple, insignificant. A play on the word.

42-44. **Survey of your good selves.** "With an allusion to the fable, which says that every man has a bag hanging before him in which he puts his neighbour's faults, and another behind him in which he stows his own." — JOHNSON.

50 ff. With a feeling of infinite superiority, Menenius admits his imperfections, but implies that they are merely those which any man of good breeding is apt to have. He prides himself on being a good fellow, a *bon vivant*, a hale fellow well met whose code of principles could naturally not be understood by such commoners as the tribunes are. That he may impress upon them more effectively the fact that they are men of lesser degree, he uses as high-sounding language as he can command. Neither his irony nor his sarcasm, however, has much effect on the tribunes, as can be seen from Brutus's reply in ll. 87-89.

50. **Humorous.** Full of whims or humors.

52. **Allaying.** Cooling, diluting.

52 ff. **Said to be,** etc. Menenius seems merely to suggest that this is the worst fault the populace finds in him.

54. **Motion.** Occasion.

58. **Wealsmen.** Statesmen. Used in an ironical sense. **Lycurguses.** Lycurgus was the renowned law-giver of Sparta. What figure?

62. **The ass in compound with.** So much stupidity mixed with.

67. **Map of my microcosm.** Face. Elizabethans spoke of man as the microcosm, and the universe as the macrocosm.

69. **Bisson conspectuities.** Purblind powers of sight.

72. **We know you well enough.** The inference seems to be, we know your character as well as your reputation and we do not think too highly of either. This seems to irritate Menenius, — something which always happens when his specious remarks do not prove convincing.

75. **For poor knaves' caps and legs.** To have poor knaves doff their caps and bow to you.

77. **You wear . . . fosset-seller.** These lines refer to Elizabethan, and not to Roman customs. Magistrates in Shakespeare's day heard lawsuits, but not so the tribunes. An **orange-wife** was a woman who sold oranges on the street. A **fosset-seller** was a vender of faucets or taps for wine casks.

77. **Rejourn.** Adjourn.

81. **Mummers.** The absurdly masked actors in a masquerade or in a Christmas play.

82. **Set up the bloody flag.** Declare war. The red flag was a signal for battle even as the white flag was a sign of peace.

89. **Perfecter . . . than a necessary,** etc. Brutus here hints that even the patricians do not attach any weight to the opinions of Menenius. Notice how this angers him, especially because he wants the commoners to be impressed by his abilities as a statesman.

95. **Botcher.** A mender of old clothes.

96. **Ass's pack saddle.** Menenius chooses the poorest kind of saddle for the figure.

99. **Since Deucalion.** That is, "since the days of Deucalion, the Greek Noah."

100. **God-den.** Good even, a contraction of "God give you good even."

102. **Being.** That is, "you being."

113. **Take my cap, Jupiter.** Menenius's mood, which had immediately changed at the sight of the women, because they belong to his class, now becomes one of exaltation. He forgets his dignity and throws his cap to Jupiter, the god of the sky.

126. **Galen.** An anachronism. Galen, a celebrated Greek physician, was born in 131 A.D. **Empiricutic.** Quackish (probably a coined word).

136. **The oaken garland.** Cf. I, iii, 16.

142. **Fidiused.** Facetiously coined from "Au-fidius."



144. **Possessed of.** Informed of.

147. **Name.** Credit, honor.

155. **Pow, wow.** Pooh, pooh! What is Volumnia's feeling towards her daughter-in-law?

163. **Place.** The consulship.

166. **Nine that I know.** Menenius does some adding also and corrects Volumnia.

175-178. **Death . . . men die.** "This ranting couplet is probably an actor's interpolation." — HUDSON.

175. **Nervy.** Sinewy.

*Stage Direction.* **Sennet.** A set of notes played on a trumpet as a signal for the approach or departure of a procession.

194. **Deed-achieving honour.** Honour from deeds achieved.

197. **My gracious silence.** Clarke's comment is worth quoting: "This name for his wife, who, while all the others are receiving him with loud rejoicings, meets and welcomes him with speechless happiness looking out from swimming eyes, is conceived in the very fulness of poetical and Shakespearian perfection. It comprises the gracefulness of the beauty which distinguishes her, and the gracious effect which the muteness of her love-joy has upon him who shrinks from noisy applause and even from merely expressed approbation; and it wonderfully concentrates into one felicitous word the silent softness that characterizes Virgilia throughout. She is precisely the woman —

formed by nature gentle in manner, and rendered by circumstances sparing in speech — to inspire the fondest affection in such a man as Coriolanus.”

216. **Crab-trees.** That is, the tribunes.

219. **A nettle.** Menenius classes the tribunes with obnoxious weeds which one must accustom one's self to seeing but which should not be permitted to be a source of annoyance.

222. **Ever, ever.** May be taken to mean a hearty assent to the words of Cominius or “ever the same Menenius.”

229. **Change of honours.** Different honors, new honors.

231. **Inherited.** Realized, obtained.

237. **Sway.** Bear sway. This remark should be borne in mind, for it is prophetic of the eventual downfall of Coriolanus. In the moment of his greatest triumph, he admits his lack of sympathy with those who alone can give him the further honors which his mother covets for him. Note, also, that even when he seems most secure, the tribunes are laying plans to bring about his downfall.

242. **Rapture.** Fit.

243. **Chats him.** Gossips about him. **Malkin.** a wench; probably a contraction of Mathilda.

244. **Lockram.** A cheap, coarse linen. **Reechy.** Dirty (literally, smoky).

245. **Bulks.** The projecting parts of a shop on which goods were exposed for sale.

248. **Horsed with variable complexions.** Be-stridden by people of all sorts.

249. **Seld-shown flamens.** Seldom-seen priests.

251. **Vulgar station.** A standing-place among the people of the lower class.

253. **Nicely-gawded.** Daintily bedecked.

254. **Pother.** Uproar.

258. **On the sudden.** That is, in his sudden rise to favor.

262. **Transport.** Bear, carry. The meaning of these lines is, "He cannot bear his honors throughout his whole course without giving offence, but will lose even those which he has won."

276. **The napless vesture of humility.** Plutarch says of this custom: "For the custom of Rome was at that time, that such as did sue for any office, should for certain days before be in the market-place, only with a poor gown on their backs, and without any coat underneath, to pray the citizens to remember them at the day of election; which was thus devised, either to move the people the more, by requesting them in such mean apparel, or else because they might show them their wounds they had gotten in the wars in the service of the Commonwealth, as manifest marks and testimonies of their valiantness."

288. **As our good wills.** "Either (1) 'as our dispositions towards him are' or (2) 'as our advantage requires.'"

291. **For an end.** To bring matters to a crisis.

293. **Still.** Always, constantly. **To's power.** To the fullest extent of his power.

296. **Disproportioned their freedoms.** Robbed their freedom of its qualities, made it no freedom.

299. **Provand.** Provender, food.

306. **Put upon't.** Incited to it.

315-317. **Matrons . . . handkerchers.** An English custom during the days of chivalry, not a Roman one.

324. **Hearts for the event.** Courage to face the outcome.

325. **Have with you.** A common idiom equivalent to "I'll go with you."

## SCENE II.

Coriolanus now rapidly approaches the parting of the ways. Although the tribunes do not conceal their hostility towards him, he has, nevertheless, two important factors to aid him in his candidacy for the consulship, — the admiration and good-will of the Senate, and the popular acclaim given a successful general. An excellent opportunity is now afforded him of regaining and retaining a safe place in the affections of the common people, but he at once shows his instinctive dislike to asking the plebeians for any favor whatsoever. As he regards the method of canvassing as humiliating, and as his attitude towards the people has apparently undergone no change, we cannot expect his canvassing to advance his fortunes.

The action of this scene follows closely after that of the preceding one, sufficient time having elapsed for ambassadors from Corioli to reach Rome.

6. **Vengeance proud.** Immoderately proud or proud with a vengeance.

15. **In.** Of, concerning.

19. **Waved.** Would waver.

23. **Discover him their opposite.** Reveal him as their opponent.

24. **Affect.** Desire, seek.

30-32. **Bonneted . . . report.** Took off their caps and bonnets to them but failed to do anything further to win their esteem and good opinion. Plutarch, in comparing Alcibiades with Coriolanus, says concerning this point: "He is less to be blamed, that seeketh to please and gratify the common people than he that despiseth and disdaineth them, and therefore offereth them wrong and injury, because he would not seem to flatter them, to win the more authority."

41. **Having determined of the Volsces.** Having come to a decision concerning the Volsces.

44. **Gratify.** Requite.

49. **Well-found.** Fortunately met with.

55-57. **Make us . . . stretch it out.** "Make us think rather that the state's means to fittingly reward him for his services are defective, than that our desire to use them for such a purpose is lacking."

60. **Your loving motion, etc.** "Your kind interposition with the common people."

62. **Convented.** Convened, assembled.

63. **Treaty.** Proposal tending to an agreement.

67. **Blessed.** Happy, glad.

70. **Off.** "Off the subject." Menenius is incensed at the tribunes for not submissively doing what they are directed to do.

87. **Disbench'd.** Caused you to leave your bench. This remark indicates that Coriolanus had taken his seat, although the stage-direction at his entrance states that he remained standing. The stage-direction for l. 78 is given in the Folios, as, "Coriolanus rises, and offers to go away." It must, therefore, be assumed that he sat down soon after Menenius began to speak.

91. **Soothed.** Flattered.

93. **Weigh.** Are worthy. Coriolanus proudly asserts his indifference to the opinion of Brutus and his followers.

98. **Monster'd.** Exaggerated, made extraordinary.

99. **Masters.** Is his use of this term sincere? Cf. l. 58.

101. **That's . . . one.** Of whom not one in a thousand is a good one.

112. **Singly.** By any single man.

113. **Made a head for Rome.** Raised an army to attack Rome.

116. **Amazonian chin.** A chin as beardless as that of an Amazon.

120. **On his knee.** That is, so that Tarquin fell on his knees.

121. **Act the woman**, etc. That is, young enough to play the parts of women on the stage. On the Elizabethan stage, female parts were always played by men.

124. **Man-enter'd thus**. Thus passed into that of manhood.

126. **Lurched**. Robbed, deprived.

129. **Speak him home**. Describe his deeds as they deserve.

134. **Took**. Took effect.

137. **Mortal**. Fatal, deadly.

138. **Painted with shunless destiny**. Hudson observes "plague-stricken houses were painted with a red cross, but there may be here a reminiscence of *Exodus* xii, 22-23."

140. **Struck . . . planet**. An allusion to the astrological belief that adverse planets had a harmful influence upon human destiny. Perhaps the dramatist also had in mind the picture of a city destroyed by thunderbolts or meteors.

143. **Fatigate**. Fatigued.

150. **With measure**. "That is, no honour will be too great for him; he will show a mind equal to any elevation." — JOHNSON. Some editors point to this as an example of dramatic irony, because the honors to which the Senator refers are those which cause his eventual downfall.

156. **Misery**. Wretchedness, poverty. It is worth noticing that this eulogy by Cominius is the last summing up of the virtues of the hero. Henceforth,

his weaknesses and deficiencies appear with increasing rapidity.

158. **To end it.** For the sake of spending it thus.

165. **Still.** Always. Coriolanus is quite willing to place his services at the command of the patricians, but in his following speech, he again shows his strong aversion to asking any favors of the plebeians.

170. **Custom.** Candidates for office in ancient Rome whitened their togas with pipe-clay to make a good appearance, and stood in the Forum dressed in this toga only. They did not appear, however, in poor and worn garments as Shakespeare seems to indicate in the phrase, "the napless vesture of humility," in II, i, l. 276, nor did they "stand naked."

174. **Pass.** Pass by, omit.

176. **Must have their voices.** Must have the privilege of voting. The tribunes at once seize the opportunity to put Coriolanus into a false position.

181. **Your form.** The form (formality) which you must go through.

190. **Do not stand upon't.** Do not object to it so stubbornly.

191. **We recommend to you . . . our purpose to them.** We commit to you the announcing of our purpose to them.

198. **Require them.** Make his request of them.



## SCENE III.

In this scene, Coriolanus quite alienates the affections of the plebeians, — the first of several blunders which finally cause his banishment. Haughty in his bearing, insolent and ironical in his speech, he proves himself totally unfitted for the office to which he aspires. His lack of sympathy with the commoners and his lack of self-control, both of which were partly revealed in the previous scenes, are now made evident with such clarity that the people cannot help but be resentful. Hence, they readily fall in with the schemes of the wily tribunes. We necessarily feel that the troubles of Coriolanus, instead of being practically ended as he assumed, have in reality just begun.

1. **Once.** Once for all.

16. **Once.** Once when.

18. **Many-headed multitude.** An allusion to the Hydra and its nine heads, which was slain by Hercules.

21. **Auburn.** Some editors retain 'abram,' the reading of the first three Folios, but most modern editors follow the reading of the fourth Folio. Both words mean practically the same.

25. **Consent of.** Agreement about.

39. **You may, you may.** You may chaff me as much as you please.

44. **Gown of humility.** Cf. II, i, l. 276.

48. **By particulars.** To each of us separately.

68. **Virtues . . . by 'em.** The virtues which our

divines preach to them, but which are wasted because the people neglect to practise them. The reference was evidently to the Elizabethan clergy.

71. **Wholesome.** Reasonable, suitable.

88. **To ask it kindly.** The First and Second Citizens are open-minded and easily impressed, but the Third Citizen seems to be an especial source of annoyance to Coriolanus.

91. **In private.** Coriolanus considers it very vulgar to exhibit his wounds in public, or to have anyone think that he attached any importance to them.

95. **Adieu.** No sooner had he obtained the necessary pledge than he deliberately walked away. He plainly shows his intense distaste for the whole performance. The citizens are astonished, and seem to regret their ready acquiescence.

101. **Customary.** Coriolanus enters into the form of the ceremony, but not into the spirit of it.

110. **Sworn brother.** Shakespeare frequently refers to the *fratres jurati* of the Middle Ages, who swore to share each other's fortunes.

112. **Condition.** Disposition.

115. **Be off.** That is, be off with my cap, doff it.

124. **Seal.** Confirm.

131. **Woolvish toge.** "Rough, hirsute gown." — JOHNSON.

133. **Needless vouches.** Needless attestations. Coriolanus still fails to see the need of these "vouches" when, as he thinks, the Senate has already chosen him as consul.

141. **Moe.** More.

145. **Your voices**, etc. A speech of irony, but not so understood by the people. The needless repetition of **voices**, the thinly-veiled sneer in **heard of**, and the mocking insinuation in **some less, some more**, are all intentional bits of burlesque, which fortunately pass over the heads of his simple-minded hearers.

157. **Limitation.** Required time.

160. **Official marks.** The insignia of the consular office.

166. **Upon your approbation.** For the purpose of confirming your election.

186. **May deserve your loves.** Brutus appears to be disgruntled because the people, contrary to instructions from the tribunes, have chosen Coriolanus. It is Sicinius who perceives that the situation is still hopeful, and who encourages the citizens to believe that they have been flouted.

203. **Aged custom.** An error by the dramatist, as the consulship had been established only eighteen years before.

218. **Charters.** Rights, privileges.

219. **Weal.** State, commonwealth. **Arriving.** Arriving at.

230. **Touch'd.** Tested, as by a touchstone.

233. **Cause.** Occasion.

234. **Gall'd.** A metaphor pertaining to a horse of high spirits.

240. **Free.** Open.

246. **Rectorship.** Against the guidance of your judgment.

252. **Deny him yet.** The Third Citizen, whom Coriolanus disliked from the first, sees a way to forestall the latter even now. "This is a point," Chambers says, "to which the tribunes wished to bring the people without themselves appearing to suggest it. The 'confirmation' is apparently the formal voting by tribes which followed the open acceptance of the candidate in the market-place, just as in a modern election the voting by ballot follows the show of hands at a nomination."

265. **Enforce.** Lay stress on.

267. **Humble weed.** The garment which signified humility.

270. **Portance.** Bearing, demeanor.

295. This arrangement of these lines, which have caused so much trouble to editors, is that adopted most widely by modern editors.

302. **Scaling.** Weighing, comparing.

306. **Purring on.** Instigation.

308. **Drawn your number.** "Assembled those who think as you do." — HUDSON.

313. **This mutiny, etc.** It would be better to hazard this mutiny than to wait for a greater one which would undoubtedly come.

317. **Anger.** Take advantage of the opportunity which his anger will afford.

## ACT III.

Having antagonized the plebeians, Coriolanus now commits the still graver blunder of turning against the patricians as well. With characteristic obtuseness, he does not seek for the cause of his predicament within himself, but places the blame upon his friends who have yielded to the demands of the commoners on previous occasions. Too short-sighted to realize the inevitable consequences of his haughty bearing during the canvassing, and underestimating the power and influence of the tribunes, he believes himself assured of election at the opening of the act; but, by the end of the act, he has succeeded in turning all classes against himself, and is exiled in disgrace. The complication is completed and the climax, or turning point of the action, occurs in the third scene of this act, ll. 87-143.

## SCENE I.

The reference to Aufidius and the Volscians at the opening of this scene is intended to remind us that though they have suffered a defeat, they are still to be reckoned with. The remainder of the scene concerns itself with the astute manner in which the tribunes bait Coriolanus until he exposes his real self. Refusing to profess an interest in, or a sympathy for, the commoners which was totally foreign to him, but which his fellow-patricians considered it both prudent and necessary publicly to avow, he is cleverly tricked

into a passionate outburst against the plebeians, and finally ends with an attack upon his own friends. The attempts of Menenius to save the situation delay matters temporarily, but hardly presage a satisfactory solution of the difficulties.

2. **Made new head.** Raised a fresh army.

5. **Our swifter composition.** Our arranging of terms more swiftly than we had expected.

15. **On safe-guard.** With a guard to protect him.

27. **To hopeless restitution.** Beyond all hope of restitution.

31. **Ironical.** "Coriolanus does not know how soon he will go to Antium, nor what his cause to seek Aufidius will be."

36. **Prank them.** Deck themselves (used contemptuously).

37. **Against all noble sufferance.** Beyond the endurance of the nobility.

53. **Now.** At one time.

71. **Sithence.** Since then.

75. **To better yours.** To surpass you in sharpness.

Coriolanus has become doubly enraged through the suspicion that the tribunes have deliberately stirred up the people to oppose his election. At first, they are evasive when he charges them with doing so, but now Brutus openly admits the truth of the accusation. Of the two tribunes, it is Brutus who despises Coriolanus the most; however, the latter appears to hate one tribune as much as he does the other. As his next

speech shows, he considers the office of tribune one that would reduce any man to a degraded position.

80. **That.** That is, the arrogance of the patrician.

86. **Him.** Brutus.

88. **Abused.** Deceived.

91. **Dishonoured rub.** Dishonourable impediment. In the game of bowls, which is played on a smooth grass plot, any slight unevenness or "rub" will deflect the bowl from its true course. Shakespeare's metaphors frequently refer to sports and games.

101. **Behold themselves.** "Let them look in the mirror which I hold up to them, a mirror which does not flatter, and see themselves." — JOHNSON.

Coriolanus, in spite of the urgent protests of his fellow-patricians, breaks forth into a tirade in the exact manner that the tribunes had foreseen. Their plans have borne fruit, and the entanglement now increases rapidly. He not only reiterates his contempt for the people, but even blames his fellow-patricians for yielding to the plebeians at an earlier time.

103. **Cockle.** A weed among corn.

114. **Measles.** Scurvy wretches. The word originally meant both leprosy and lepers.

115. **Tetter.** Infect with tetter, a disease of the skin.

119. **Of their infirmity.** As weak as they.

130. **Triton.** The trumpeter of the sea, who by his blast upon a sea shell could stir or calm the waves.

132. **From the canon.** Some editors interpret this to mean "according to rule" or, in other words, that

the tribunes had the authority indicated by Sicinius's use of "shall"; others, however, explain it as meaning "contrary to the canon," — that is, contrary to the powers granted to the tribunes. Sicinius's speech in Scene iii, ll. 18–25, of this act supports the latter opinion.

136. **Hydra.** The plebeians. Cf. II, iii, 18.

138. **The horn and noise.** Hendiadys, meaning "the noisy horn."

142. **Vail.** Let fall, lower. The meaning is, "If he have power, then let your ignorance, which gave it to him, lower itself before him."

143. **Dangerous lenity.** Mildness dangerous to you.

145. **Cushions by you.** Seats near you (*i.e.* in the Senate).

149. **The great'st taste.** The predominant flavor.

154. **Greece.** The Greek cities were pure democracies.

159. **Take the one by the other.** Destroy each other's power.

162. **Give forth corn . . . gratis.** We are led to infer that the distribution of corn referred to happened at an earlier date and was opposed by Coriolanus. However, Plutarch says that it occurred after Coriolanus's rejection as consul.

174. **Our recompense.** A reward from us.

178. **Thread.** File through one by one.

184. **Native.** Origin, source. Some editors have suggested "motive."



186. **Bosom multiplied.** "The bosom of that many-headed monster, the people." Some modern editors substitute here, "bisson multitude," *i.e.* "the blind multitude." The reading here adopted is that of the Folios because there seems to be no need for emendation. The word "bosom" as the seat of the feelings is frequently used by Shakespeare.

187. **Let deeds, etc.** "Let their past and present deeds be taken as an indication of what they are likely to say openly."

192. **Call our cares fears.** Attribute our anxiety for their welfare to fear.

199. **Worship.** Authority.

201. **Without.** Beyond. **Gentry.** Gentle birth.

203. **Conclude.** Come to a decision, agree upon terms.

206. **Slightness.** Weakness. **Barr'd.** Thwarted.

210. **You, etc.** Coriolanus can not comprehend the leniency of the patricians, and now proposes that while there is yet time, they should retrieve their errors by abolishing the tribunate. He is a warrior, not a politician, and hence believes in overcoming opposition to his views by sweeping measures.

212. **Dread the change on't.** Fear the change of it.

215. **Jump.** Risk, hazard.

219. **Lick the sweet.** That is, have the pleasure of interfering in state affairs.

221. **Integrity.** Oneness, wholeness.

229. **Bald.** Evidently an epithet of contempt meaning senseless, witless.

240. **Aediles.** Officers who assisted the tribunes.

244. **Attach.** Arrest.

266. **Confusion.** Ruin.

280. **What is the city, etc.** This question brings out the fundamental difference between the two classes and their representatives. The tribunes, as well as Coriolanus, consider that their class makes up the city, and out of this irreconcilable difference grow the present and future clashes.

289. **Distinctly ranges.** Stands upright and perfect

291. **This.** That is, the attack by Coriolanus on the rights and liberties of the plebeians. This speech has been given by some editors to Coriolanus, but most modern editors agree with Keightley's suggestion that he "is standing apart, in proud and sullen rage."

296. **Present.** Immediate.

298. **The rock Tarpeian.** A precipitous cliff from which criminals, especially traitors, were cast down.

334. **Tent.** Probe.

342. **Worthy.** Justifiable.

343. **Will owe another.** "This defeat will be compensated by a future success."

349. **Beyond arithmetic.** Beyond calculation.

352. **Tag.** The rabble. "The lowest and most despicable of the populace are still denominated by those a little above them, *Tag, rag and bobtail.*" —

JOHNSON.

356. I'll try, etc. Once again Menenius feels that it is time for him to step into the breach. He feels that diplomacy can regain what has been lost, and that with his "old wit" he can undoubtedly accomplish much. He fails to remember his former failures.

391. Cry *havoc*. Give the signal for merciless destruction. "To give to an army the order *havoc* [was] the signal for the seizure of spoil, and so of general spoliation or pillage." — MURRAY.

393. Warrant. Measures.

411. But one danger. "Nothing but a continual source of danger." — HUDSON. Later events proved that the tribunes showed considerable political sagacity at this point.

416. Deserved. Deserving.

417. Jove's own book. The book of life.

430. Clean *kam*. Altogether wrong. "Kam" is of Celtic origin and means "crooked."

431. Merely. Absolutely, entirely.

434-435. The service, etc. This speech rightly belongs to Menenius because it is a continuation of his argument, but several editors gave it to Sicinius. Malone explains the whole argument thus: "You allege that being diseased he must be cut away. According to your argument, the foot, being once gangrened, is not to be respected for what it was before it was gangrened. 'Is this just?' he would have added, if the tribune had not interrupted him."

443. Unscann'd, Inconsiderate.

445. **Process.** Legal methods.

455. **Bolted language.** Refined language. Bolting is the process of sifting the "meal" from the "bran."

466. **Lay down your weapons.** Sicinius consents to the proposal, but retains his superiority by naming Menenius as "the people's officer." He is still in control of the situation, and while yielding temporarily in a spirit of compromise, reminds the latter that he still holds the upper hand.

## SCENE II.

The issue of the struggle is now delayed to bring in a second time the powerful influence which Volumnia wields over her son. Deaf to the repeated admonitions of his other advisers, he is, however, completely submissive to his mother's advice and partially regains our respect by his promises to exercise tact and self-control in the future. This compliance with the wishes of his mother prepares us for the outcome of the dramatic conflict between Coriolanus and her in Act V, Scene iii, in which she saves Rome from capture.

3. **Death on the wheel, etc.** "Shakespeare may have been thinking of his own time, but he was evidently acquainted with the classics. Punishment on the wheel is suggested in the Greek myth of Ixion, although apparently not used in ancient Rome. Tullus Hostilius had Metius Suffetius torn to pieces by horses (*Aeneid*, VIII, 642), which Livy informs us was

the only instance of such punishment in Roman history down to the end of the Republic." — HUDSON.

Such punishments were common during the Middle Ages.

5. **Precipitation.** Precipitousness, sheerness.

6. **Beam of sight.** The range of sight.

11. **Woolen vassals.** A contemptuous slur at the coarse clothing of the working people.

12. **Groats.** Fourpences.

14. **Ordinance.** Order, rank.

23. **Let go.** Let it go, let us have done with it.

31. **Burn too.** This remark seems inconsistent with Volumnia's preceding counsel, but must be considered as an outburst of her real feelings, which prudence warns her must not appear at the present time. Cf. ll. 9-15 above.

39. **Apt.** Amenable, docile.

53. **Absolute.** Uncompromising, arbitrary.

70. **Force.** Urge.

71. **It lies you on.** It is incumbent upon you.

75. **Roted.** Learned by rote.

77. **Of no allowance, etc.** That is, not acknowledge as true in your bosom.

80. **Put you to your fortune.** Compel you to risk the fortunes of war.

84. **I am in this.** I am at stake in this.

88. **Inheritance.** Possession, obtaining.

89. **That want.** The want of their "loves."

96. **Thus far.** Volumnia lowers it to the ground.

98. **Bussing.** Kissing.

113-114. **For they have pardons,** etc. "To win their pardons costs no more than to speak idle words to them." — HUDSON.

131. **Unbarb'd sconce.** Bare or unarmed head. A barb was an armour for the breast and the flanks of a war horse.

134. **Plot.** My own person, body. This speech is to arouse in us a momentary sympathy for the leading character.

150. **Quired with.** Sounded in harmony with.

153. **Tent.** Encamp, lodge as in a tent.

162. **Inherent.** Abiding, *i.e.* one that will remain.

165. **Than thou of them.** Than for thee to beg of them.

166. **Feel thy pride.** Endure all that thy pride may bring upon us.

175. **Cog.** Cheat, cozen.

187. **The word.** Pass-word, watch-word.

### SCENE III.

The supreme moment is now at hand. Coriolanus can retrieve his past blunders if self-mastery can triumph over passion and aristocratic prejudice long enough to convince the people that a change in his attitude has really taken place. The element of suspense is thus introduced again, and we await the result of the new test with considerable trepidation. For, as one editor says, "he is not a fine enough man to

meet the people with a real humility; too fine to persevere in his affected one." The accusations which he expected and which he was prepared to refute are not made, but in their stead the tribunes bring forth new ones, which because of their injustice arouse his extreme anger. So that when they openly call him traitor, all his pent-up hatred bursts forth, and his doom is sealed.

Brandes, the Danish critic, thinks that this fierce tirade proves that Shakespeare looked upon treason as an unpardonable crime.

4. **Enforce him with his envy.** Charge him with his hatred. **Envy.** Hatred, malice.

5. **Spoil got on the Antiates.** Plutarch says that Coriolanus took great spoil in some forays against the Antiates, that took place after the siege, but that he reserved none for himself. Such an obviously unjust accusation, Coriolanus will hardly be able to overlook.

14. **By the poll.** By the head, individually.

16. **Tribes.** The voting in each tribe (a division of the Romans) was by counting heads, *i.e.* by the poll, but afterwards the tribes voted as a unit. Originally, there were only three tribes, but the number increased very much later on.

25. **I' the truth o' the cause.** In the justice of our cause.

30. **Enforce.** Urge. **Present.** Immediate.

37. **Put him to choler.** Stir him up to anger.

38. **His worth.** His full proportion.

40. **Temperance.** Self-control, self-restraint.

41-42. **That is**, etc. "And in him is that which seems likely, as we shall take advantage of it, to break his neck."

47. **Bear the knave**. Permit himself to be called knave.

62. **This present**. The former charge, which he is now prepared to answer.

66. **Allow**. Acknowledge.

73. **The holy churchyard**. An anachronism. Why?

81. **Envy you**. Indicate malice toward you.

Cominius, as a soldier, also dislikes to hear Menenius repeatedly referring to Coriolanus's wounds and making apologies for his military airs even though the wounds would win favor with the populace, and the apologies show tact.

85. **The very hour**. The very same hour.

91. **Season'd office**. "Established and settled by time, and made familiar to the people by long use." — JOHNSON.

98. **Their traitor**. A traitor to them. Coriolanus has not acuteness enough to see that he has been led into a trap and so loses his self-control just as the tribunes had expected.

99. **Sat**. Conditional use of subjunctive, "if there sat."

100. **Clutched**. Passive. "If there were clutched."

114. **Capital**. Deserving death.

126. **Pent**. The sentence of being confined. Used as an object of pronoun.



129. **Courage.** Plain-speaking, not bravery, as he has not been accused of lacking that quality, nor is it consistent with his previous modesty for him to boast of his valor now.

133. **Envied against.** Cf. ll. 61–63 above.

135. **Not.** Not merely.

144–145. Cf. ll. 12–35. Why is the voting not by poll?

155. **Estimate.** Worth, reputation.

163. **Cry.** Pack. Realizing that his fortunes are irretrievably lost, Coriolanus gives vent to his real feelings without check. Hitherto, he has usually expressed these frank opinions only in the presence of the patricians.

174. **Making but reservation of yourselves.** Many editors adopt the reading of Capell, who substituted “not” for “but.” The meaning, however, is clear without the change. Coriolanus reminds the people that although the plebeians may retain the power to banish their defenders, even as they do him, the time will eventually come when their stupidity, which can see no peril until it actually feels it, will keep only themselves, their own worst foes, in the city; so that, lacking any real leaders, they will probably be captured without blows by some nation, and led away as humiliated captives.

176. **Abated.** Down-trodden, beaten-down, humiliated.

179. **A world elsewhere.** This remark looks forward

to future action. He still wants to emphasize the fact that he is not dependent upon their ungrateful and fickle plaudits. In l. 167, he has plainly told them that he is doing the banishing, not they.

182. **Hoo! hoo!** "After declaration of the sentence, the people made such joy, as they never rejoiced more for any battle they had won upon their enemies, they were so brave and lively, and went home so jocundly from the assembly, for triumph of this sentence." — PLUTARCH.

185. **Vexation.** Mortification. The term had a stronger meaning than it has now. Note how the tribunes glory in their triumph.

#### ACT IV.

When Coriolanus defiantly shouts to the mob which is insistently calling for his banishment (III, iii, 177-179)

" Despising,

For you, the city, thus I turn my back :

There is a world elsewhere,"

it is obvious that he is not a broken or crushed man, but one who feels that he, and not the people, is doing the banishing, and who already has a scheme in mind, not fully formed perhaps, whereby he will still conquer his fate.

We have already been led to feel that his misfortune is not wholly deserved because of the false charges

made against him. Our sympathy for him is still further elicited in the first three scenes of this act. In a dignified and unassuming manner, he takes his solitary departure, and we are ready to share the righteous wrath of Volumnia when she attacks the craven tribunes. In the third scene, the Volscians are again brought in. This time, however, they are no more possible aggressors, but very probable ones as soon as the least sign of weakness appears in Rome.

In the fourth scene we hear for the first time what plan of revenge Coriolanus has been concocting, and in the fifth we see him taking the initial step in executing it. So daring has been the plan that it excites our interest and introduces an element of suspense as to both its wisdom and its chances of success. And even when Coriolanus and Aufidius become reconciled, and the latter even offers the former a share in the command of the new armies, we cannot help but feel uneasy about the future of our hero. That our fears are not groundless is shown by Scene vii, for here we see Aufidius regretting his generosity, and pondering with jealous emotions upon the popularity of his rival and the reason therefor.

Scene vi effectively pictures the consternation in Rome when the news of Coriolanus's alliance with the Volscians becomes known. This scene is well placed because the audience knows what is about to befall Rome.

## SCENE I.

7-8. **When the sea, etc.** Same metaphor used by Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 33 ff.

9-11. **Being gentle wounded, craves a noble cunning.** "To be gentle, although wounded, demands a noble philosophy." — CLARKE.

14. **O heavens! O heavens!** Virgilia, after this single cry of anguish, remains silent during the remainder of this pathetic scene.

16. **The red pestilence.** "The bubonic plague, the name arising from the colored swelling, sometimes red, which was one of its earliest signs." — DORAN. There were outbreaks of the plague in London in 1582 and in 1606.

20. **Lacked.** Missed.

29. **Sometime.** Former. Cominius is referred to.

33. **Fond.** Foolish.

34. **Wot.** Know.

38. **His fen.** His concealed retreat in the marshes. The Cambridge editor quotes Topsell, *History of Serpents*: "Of the Indian Dragons there are also said to be two kindes, one of them fenny, and living in marishes . . . the other in the mountains."

42. **Cautelous.** Crafty.

46. **Exposture.** Exposure.

48. **O the gods!** Chambers suggests that "Coriolanus suddenly realizes how the revenge, which is already beginning to shape itself in his mind, must inevitably

bring him into conflict with all that he holds most dear.”

52. **Repeal.** Recall from exile.

61. **Of noble touch.** Of “touched” or tested nobility. Metals, especially gold, were tested or tried by the touchstone. Cf. II, iii, 230.

65. **Like me formerly.** In what sense does Coriolanus mean this?

## SCENE II.

19. **The hoarded plague o’ the gods.** Cf. King Lear, II, iv, 164–165:

“ All the stor’d vengeance of heaven fall  
On her ingrateful top! ”

29. **Mankind.** “ The word *mankind* is used maliciously by the first speaker, and taken perversely by the second. A *mankind* woman is a woman with the roughness of a man, and, in an aggravated sense, a woman ferocious, violent, and eager to shed blood. In this sense Sicinius asks Volumnia if she be *mankind*. She takes *mankind* for *human creature*, and accordingly cries out, ‘ Note but this fool. Was not a man my father? ’ ” — JOHNSON.

32. **Foxship.** Cunning. The fox was also symbolical of ingratitude.

41. **In Arabia.** That is, in a land where they could fight to a finish.

49. **The noble knot.** That is, the noble tie that bound him to his country.

65. **Baited with.** Worried by. The metaphor is from the sport of bear-baiting, in which dogs were made to bite the bear.

77. **Faint puling.** "By this slight touch, and by the epithet *faint*, how well is indicated the silent agony of weeping in which Virgilia is lost." — CLARKE.

### SCENE III.

5. **Against 'em.** Nicanor, who is a Roman, acts as a spy for the Volscians.

9. **Favour.** Countenance, look. **Appeared.** Apparent. The meaning of the clause is "your countenance is recalled to me by your voice."

32. **Them.** The Volscians.

36. **He cannot choose.** He cannot do otherwise, but he would prefer another combat with Coriolanus.

45. **Distinctly billeted.** Assigned to their respective quarters.

46. **In the entertainment.** Engaged for service.

### SCENE IV.

3. **'Fore my wars.** To be joined with "groan" and "drop."

6. **Wives.** Women.

17. **O world, thy slippery turns, etc.** Coriolanus has not been given much to philosophizing before this. Is this speech intended to indicate a change in his character springing from his adversity?

23. **Of a doit.** About a doit; *i.e.* about a mere trifle.
27. **Take.** Destroy.
28. **Trick.** Trifle.
30. **Interjoin their issues.** Rolfe's explanation is, "let their children intermarry." A rather remarkable explanation is that of Chambers, "unite their designs."
33. **If he give me way.** If he permits it.

## SCENE V.

3. **Cotus.** A name not found in *Plutarch*.
7. **Not like a guest.** Coriolanus is still in disguise.
12. **In being Coriolanus.** In having obtained that name by capturing Corioli.
15. **Companions.** Fellows.
27. **Avoid.** Leave, get out of.
32. **Poor.** A play on words. The Servant uses "poor" in the sense of "inferior," Coriolanus uses the word in the usual sense.
37. **Batten.** Gorge yourself. Literally, "fatten up."
43. **Canopy.** Cf. Hamlet, II, iii, 311-312: "This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament."
49. **Daws.** The daw was always considered a foolish bird.
53. **Meddle with, etc.** "Do you bring my master's name into the question?"
73. **What's thy name.** Is it probable that Aufidius

would not recognize a man with whom he had fought so often?

84. **Memory.** Memorial.

89. **Dastard nobles.** Coriolanus's wrath against the nobles, which he had already shown, sprung from the fact that he felt he had been sacrificed by them in order to save the remnants of their power.

92. **Hoop'd.** Whooped, hooted.

98. **Full quit of.** Fully revenged upon.

100. **A heart of wreak.** A heart desiring vengeance.

103. **Maims of shame.** Shameful injuries.

108. **Canker'd.** Corrupted, polluted. **Spleen.** See note to I, i, 121.

123. **Envy.** Hatred.

127. **Where against.** Against which.

129. **Scarr'd.** Some editors change this hyperbole to *scar'd*, but Delius's quotation in defence of the Folio reading seems most satisfactory: "The ship boring the moon with her mainmast." — *The Winter's Tale*, III, iii, 93. **Clip.** Embrace.

130. **The anvil of my sword.** That is, he who received the blows of my sword as the anvil receives those of the hammer.

138. **Bestride my threshold.** Enter my house.

140. **Power on foot.** An army under way.

142. **Out.** Out and out, thoroughly.

159. **Absolute.** Perfect.

177. **My mind gave me.** My mind made me suspect.



191. **You wot one.** You know the one to whom I refer.

196. **The greater soldier.** From what follows, we can readily see that the servants agree that Coriolanus is the greater soldier, but the Second Serving-man does not deem it wise to say anything so definite that it would be derogatory to his master.

219. **Scotched.** Cut, gashed. **Carbonado.** "A piece of fish, flesh, or fowl, scored across and grilled or broiled upon the coals." — MURRAY.

220. **Cannibally given.** Given or inclined to cannibalism.

225. **Set at the upper end of the table.** Figuratively, shown especial favor.

In an Elizabethan mansion, the halls where the meals were served was furnished with an upper table capable of extension and known as a draw-top table. At this table the family sat, chairs being set for the master and mistress of the house, and stools for the younger members of the household and ordinary guests; along the sides of the hall were ranged plain, long tables and forms for the servants and dependents. When guests could not find room at the high table, the upper ends of the side tables were used for their accommodation, a salt being placed where the distinction of class commenced.

228. **Sanctifies . . . hand.** Regards the touch of his hand as holy.

229. **The white o' the eye.** An expression of pious rapture.

233. **Sowl.** Pull by the ears. A provincialism still used in some parts of England.

235. **Poll'd.** Bared, cleared (originally, *cut the hair*).

242. **Directitude.** Generally considered a humorous blunder for some word, probably decrepitude or discredited.

245. **In blood.** In good condition.

246. **Conies.** Rabbits.

258. **Audible.** Quick of hearing, alert. A passive adjective used in an active sense. **Full of vent.** This phrase has caused much discussion, and has been explained in several ways. Some editors follow Baynes, who regards it as the hunting term, meaning "the scenting of the game"; others follow Wright, who thinks that it is an allusion to the fermentation of wine, meaning "effervescent, working, ready to burst the cask," and as used antithetically with **mulled**, which means "insipid," "lifeless," a term used to refer to spiced or sweetened wine.

#### SCENE VI.

8. **Pestering.** Thronging, crowding to discomfort.

28. **God-den.** Good even. A shortened form of "God give ye good even." Cf. II, i, 100.

41. **Confusion.** Ruin.

46. **Sole throne.** The tribunes still contend that the charge made against Coriolanus in III, iii, 89-93 was the cause of his punishment, even though they knew it to be a false one.

49. **To all our lamentation.** To the sorrow of all of us.

53. **Safe and still.** This expression of a feeling of unwarranted security helps to heighten the dramatic effect of what so rapidly follows.

55. **Put in prison.** "This touch, showing how incredible the truth appeared, is perhaps the most ironical thing in the scene." — CHAMBERS.

62. **Thrusts forth his horns.** A figure from the snail.

63. **Stood.** Stood as its defender.

76. **Information.** Informant.

87. **His raising.** "It is a rumor invented by him."

91. **Delivered.** Reported.

96-97. **As spacious . . . thing.** "As boundless in extent as from the beginning of time until the present." White's explanation is, "Revenge that shall embrace all, from the youngest to the oldest."

101. **Good.** Used ironically.

104. **Atone.** Be at one, agree.

116. **The city leads.** The leaden roofs of the houses.

121. **Whereon you stood.** For which you contended so stubbornly.

122. **Into an auger's bore.** That is, into the smallest possible limits.

135. **Apron-men.** Artisans and trades-people wore aprons.

137. **The voice of occupation.** The vote of the working men.

138. **The breath of garlic-eaters.** The lower classes

of Shakespeare's day were evidently very fond of onions and garlic. Bottom, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV, ii, 43, says to his fellow "mechanicals," "Most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath."

141. **Mellow fruit.** An allusion to the golden apples of the Hesperides.

146. **Smilingly.** Smiling with scorn for your authority.

157. **Charged.** Would charge, or, in other words, implore him, as his enemies should do.

165. **Made fair hands.** Done fine work.

173. **Clusters.** Swarms of people, mobs.

176. **Roar him in again.** "As he went out with scoffs, he will come back with lamentations." — JOHNSON.

177. **Second name.** Second in renown after Coriolanus. **Points.** Commands. Ordinarily, "a point of war" was a signal given by a trumpet.

182. **And is Aufidius,** etc. Menenius still seems only half convinced that his opinion expressed in ll. 103-105 can be incorrect.

187. **Coxcombs.** "With a play on the word as applied to the fool's cap."

202. **Cry.** Pack of hounds.

213. **So did we all.** Here, as elsewhere, the commoners are not willing to bear the blame for the results of their own actions. They show the evidences of the fickleness with which Shakespeare always characterizes the common people.

## SCENE VII.

7. **Your own.** Your own soldiers.

16. **For your particular.** For your own part, as far as you personally are concerned.

22. **What I can urge against him.** What this charge may be, we never find out. It is sufficient to know that Aufidius has been laying plans to deprive Coriolanus of his popularity.

34-66. **All places, etc.** Of this passage Coleridge says, "I have always thought this the least explicable from the mood and the full intention of the speaker of any in the whole works of Shakespeare." Can you perceive any inconsistency?

40. **Osprey.** An allusion to the belief that the osprey had the power of fascinating fish so that they turned over on their backs, and became helpless prey.

43. **Carry his honours even.** "Carry his honours without losing his equilibrium." A figure from balancing.

43-52. **Whether 'twas pride, etc.** "Aufidius assigns three probable reasons of the miscarriage of Coriolanus: pride, which easily follows an uninterrupted train of success; unskillfulness to regulate the consequences of his own victories; a stubborn uniformity of nature, which could not make the proper transition from the *casque* or *helmet* to the *cushion* or *chair of civil authority*, but acted with the same despotism in peace as in war." — JOHNSON.

44-45. **Which . . . man.** Which springing from continuous success always taints the good judgment of the fortunate man.

51. **Garb.** Manner.

53. **Not all.** Aufidius will not say that Coriolanus has any of these defects in full measure. **Spices.** Touches, samples.

55-56. **But he . . . utterance.** Aufidius suddenly breaks off in his enumeration of the faults of Coriolanus, and remarks, "But he has merit enough to make his accusers choke while mentioning his faults."

56 ff. **So our virtues,** etc. Whitelaw interprets the meaning of this passage as follows: "Our virtues are virtues no longer if the time interprets them as none. The soldier who is all soldier is misinterpreted in time of peace; for his unfitness for space is seen, his fitness for war is not seen."

59. **Evident.** Certain. **Chair.** Curule chair, the seat of the magistrates.

61. **One fire drives out one fire.** "An allusion to the old idea of curing a burn by applying heat." — HUDSON.

62. **Fouler.** *Falter* and *founder* have been proposed as emendations. Which seems to be preferable?

#### ACT V.

The last act sets forth the tragic failure of the plan which had its inception in the previous act. The

ambitious plans of Coriolanus come to grief because he remained the same Coriolanus that he had always been. Change of environment had not been accompanied by change of character, and, therefore, failure is inevitable.

The first two scenes picture the dismay of the Romans because of the unsuccessful mission of Cominius, and the iron resolve which Coriolanus exhibits when Menenius with real humility makes his appeal. Thus, the stage is set for Volumnia, and the importance of her effort is naturally intensified by such a background. The third scene is without question the most dramatic and most powerful in the play. Here is a conflict of souls which is worthy of the master hand of the great dramatist. When the mother finally triumphs, we can look forward to the inescapable doom of the son.

## SCENE I.

1. **He.** Cominius.

4. **In a most dear particular.** With a very close personal affection.

6. **Knee.** Make your way upon your knee.

7. **Coy'd.** Disdained. Look up the early meanings of this word.

20. **Rack'd.** Strained to the utmost, exerted every effort.

21. **To make coals cheap.** A sneer at the efforts of the tribunes, for when Rome is burning, the demand for coals will cease. **Memory.** Memorial.

24. A bare petition. A mere petition. Coriolanus reminded Cominius that the state which had actually punished him had now the audacity to entreat for pardon for itself.

28. Offered. Tried, attempted.

33. Nose. Scent, smell. **One poor grain**, etc. Menenius is deeply surprised that Coriolanus could have so forgotten his personal friends.

41. **So never-needed help**. Help never needed so much as now.

45. **Instant**. Hastily collected or levied.

55. **Grief-shot**. Sorrow-stricken.

58-60. **That thanks . . . well**. Such thanks as are proportionate to your good intentions.

61-62. **I'll undertake't**, etc. Although Menenius is highly pleased to be urged to undertake the commission, he is, however, little pleased when he thinks of the very probable failure of it. Still as an epicure, he, in his usual short-sighted way, flatters himself that he can succeed where others have failed by taking Coriolanus after his dinner.

63. **Hum**. That is, say "hum" in a tone of scorn or contempt.

64. **Taken well**. Approached at an appropriate time; that is, when he was in the right mood.

72. **Be dieted to my request**. That is, has eaten himself into a mood in which he will look at my request with favor.

78. **Speed**. Turn out, fare.



83. **In gold.** On a throne of gold.

84-85. **His injury,** etc. The wrong done him restrains his pity.

90. **What he . . . conditions.** This passage seems incomplete, but no emendations have been offered which are altogether satisfactory. The meaning probably is: What he agreed to do, he had set down in the written terms of surrender, and he bound us with an oath to yield to the conditions to which he refused to agree.

#### SCENE II.

15. **Good my friends.** My good friends.

17. **Lots to blanks.** "A thousand to one." — MURRAY. The *lots* are the prizes in a lottery; the *blank* is nothing. However, the figure derives its force from the relative value of the two, and not the relative number.

18. **It is Menenius.** In his self-conceit, Menenius announces his name as if the very mention of it should serve as a countersign anywhere.

23. **Lover.** Loving friend. A term often used of close male friends.

26. **Verified.** Stood up for, or spoken the truth about. Whitelaw paraphrased ll. 26-31 as follows: "I have always spoken the truth about my friends' good acts — always the whole truth — sometimes perhaps a little more than the truth."

29. **Subtle.** Deceptively smooth.

30. **Tumbled past the throw.** Overshot the mark.

31. **Stamp'd the leasing.** Given untruth the stamp of good coin. **Leasing.** Falsehood.

40. **Factionary on the party of your general.** Taking my stand in a quarrel on the side of your general.

54. **Front.** Confront. **Easy.** That is, easy to call up.

57. **Dotant.** Dotard: that is, one who is in his dotage or second childhood and is given to foolish affection.

69. **Your half pint of blood.** "All there is in an old man's veins." — CHAMBERS.

74. **Companion.** A term of deprecation. **Say an errand.** Have you sent on an errand.

77. **Jack guardant.** A Jack on guard. The term *Jack* was often used contemptuously, while *guardant* was a heraldic term. The expression may be compared with the well-known phrase, "Jack in office." **Office me.** Use his office to keep me from.

78. **Entertainment with.** Reception from.

83. **Synod.** Assembly, council.

87. **Water.** That is, tears. **Hardly.** With difficulty.

99. **Servanted to.** Subject to.

100. **Properly.** As my own personal matter. The meaning of these lines is, "Though I possess the power to execute my revenge, the power to remit it remains with the Volscians."

101-103. **That . . . much.** "Ungrateful forgetful-

ness shall destroy our former familiarity rather than pity shall show how (great) it was."

112. **Constant temper.** Cf. I, i, 305. Does Aufidius see any signs of weakening in Coriolanus?

116. **Shent.** Rebuked, reprovcd.

122. **Slight.** Insignificant, worthless.

123. **By himself.** By his own hands.

127. **A noble fellow.** The First Sentinel seems touched by the manner in which Menenius bears his repulse.

### SCENE III.

4. **plainly.** Straightforwardly, without concealment.

14. **godded.** Idolized, made a god of. Noun used as a verb.

16. **showed.** Appeared.

18. **To grace him.** To do him honor.

29. **But out, affection!** Note how vehemently Coriolanus reaffirms his determination not to yield to any plea based on affection. Is this a sign that he fears he will?

36. **Olympus.** A mountain in Thessaly, where the gods were supposed to dwell.

47. **Delivers.** Shows. How does she misunderstand him?

50. **Am out.** A technical phrase of the theatre, meaning "have forgotten my part."

51. **Best of my flesh.** Virgilia.

55. **Jealous queen of heaven.** Juno, who was ever

jealous of Jupiter, and was supposed to punish conjugal infidelity among mortals.

57. **Virgin'd it.** Been as a virgin.

68. **Corrected.** "Rebuked for his delay in greeting her."

70. **Fillip.** Strike, beat. What figure? Find other examples.

72. **Murdering impossibility.** Putting an end to the impossible.

78. **Curdied.** Congealed.

79. **Dian's temple.** The goddess of the moon, Diana, was always symbolical of modesty among the Romans.

80. **This is a poor epitome, etc.** This boy (meaning young Marcius), is yourself on a small scale.

83. **The god of soldiers.** Mars, the Roman god of war.

88. **Sea-mark.** Beacon. **Flaw.** Gust or storm.

90. **Your knee.** The boy had evidently not knelt when the women did so, but remains standing, and is commended here by his father for his show of spirit. In l. 210, however, he does kneel.

96. **The thing, etc.** "What I have sworn not to grant cannot be held by you as refusals." — HUDSON.

98. **Capitulate.** Treat with.

107. **Fail in.** Fail in granting.

115. **Bewray.** Betray, make known.

127. **Capital.** Deadly, fatal.

140. **The palm.** That is, the symbol of victory.

143. **Determine.** Come to an end, terminate.

180–184. **Thou hast affected,** etc. “Volumnia suggests that Coriolanus has brought Rome to her knees to save his honour, never meaning really to injure her, just as Jove when he thunders injures nothing more important than a tree.” — CHAMBERS. The “fine strains of honour” may be freely rendered as “the finest or loftiest impulses or aspirations of a man of honour.”

193. **Like one i' the stocks.** Like one who has been shamed by being imprisoned in the stocks and cannot effect his release by mere words.

197. **Has clucked thee.** “Caius Martius, . . . being left an orphan by his father, was brought up under his mother, a widow.” — PLUTARCH.

213. **To. For.**

Observe how Volumnia has appealed to her son's feeling of patriotism, to his reason, to his love of mother, wife, and child, to his sense of honor as a soldier, and now has recourse, just as the tribunes had done, to a palpably false charge. Appeals to his reason may have affected him, appeals to his feelings (perhaps accompanied by tears) have doubtless moved him greatly, but it is the final act of disowning him that causes him to yield.

222. **Unnatural.** “The whole situation is unnatural; a Roman making war on Rome; a mother pleading with her son for mercy; a conqueror melted by a woman.”

227. **Mortal.** Used adverbially.
244. **A former fortune.** That is, regain such power as I had before I shared it with Coriolanus.
247. **Drink together.** Symbolical of peace and amity.
251. **A temple.** "Whereupon the Senate ordained that the magistrates, to gratify and honour these ladies, should grant them all they would require. And they only requested that they would build a temple of Fortune for the women." — PLUTARCH. This temple is said to have stood at the fourth milestone on the Via Latina, where the women met Coriolanus.

## SCENE IV.

1. **Coign.** Corner.
8. **Stay upon.** Wait for.
11. **Condition.** Disposition.
20. **Engine.** That is, of war.
24. **A thing made for.** An image or statue made to represent Alexander.
26. **Wants nothing of a god.** Lacks nothing requisite to a god.
29. **In the character.** In his true character, as he really is.
33. **Long of.** Because of, through.
42. **Hale.** Haul, drag.
50. **Expulsion of the Tarquins.** For the part Coriolanus played in that episode, see Act II, Sc. ii, ll. 112–123.
56. **A fine metaphor.** Shakespeare may have derived

it from the rapidity with which the Thames flowed through the arches of the London Bridge.

58-60. **Hautboys.** Wooden double-reed wind instruments of high pitch. **Psalteries.** Ancient and mediæval stringed instruments, played by plucking the strings with the fingers or with a plectrum. **Sackbut.** A bass trumpet with a slide like that of a trombone for altering the pitch. **Tabor.** A small drum, used chiefly as an accompaniment for a pipe, for festive occasions.

61. **Make the sun dance.** It was a popular belief that the sun danced on Easter Sunday.

76. **At point to enter.** On the point of entering.

#### SCENE V.

6. **Unshout.** Nullify by shouts of welcome to his mother the tumult with which you banished Marcius.

Referring to this celebration, Plutarch says: "There was not a temple in the city but was presently set open, and full of men wearing garlands upon their heads, sacrificing to the gods, as they were wont to do upon the news of some great obtained victory. And this common joy was yet more manifestly shewed by the honourable courtesies the whole Senate and people did bestow on the ladies."

#### SCENE VI.

Coriolanus has finally become enmeshed in the tangles of his own web. Having chosen to recoup his

former failure by a scheme from which he could not escape at its fulfilment but by showing a want of natural affection or by proving treacherous to his newly-made friends, he arouses our pity for his want of foresight, but by his death satisfies our idea of dramatic justice.

5. **Him.** He whom. The antecedent was frequently merged with the relative. Vid. *Abbot*, § 246.

*Stage direction.* **Attendants.** These attendants are introduced merely as a stage service to make a stately entry.

28. **Pawned.** Pledged.

31. **Flattery.** Surely a conscious falsehood.

35. **Stoutness.** Pride. Cf. III, ii, 133. May perhaps mean obstinacy or stubbornness.

46. **End all his.** Gather in for himself, make all his own.

49. **Waged me.** Paid me wages, made me feel dependent.

50. **Mercenary.** That is, a mercenary or paid soldier.

56. **Sinews.** Abilities.

58. **Rheum.** Tears. Compare this speech with Aufidius's admission in the third scene of this act, l. 232, "I was moved withal."

63. **Like a post.** Like a mere messenger bringing news of the success of Coriolanus.

74. **After your way.** After your version of his action.

75. **Reasons.** That is, arguments defending his conduct.



87-88. Answering us, With our own charge. "Returning us nothing, but the costs of the war."

91. **Hail, lords!** Note how the dramatist again makes us feel a certain respect for his hero by having him face matters in a bold and unapologetic manner. Later, this respect is increased by the false explanation of his conduct made by Aufidius, in 112 ff.

99. **A full third part.** That is, by a full third part.

105. **Compounded on.** Agreed upon.

107. **Traitor.** Note that Aufidius, like the tribunes, knows the weak point in the armor of Coriolanus. The Folios did not have a comma after the word *traitor*. Would the omission of the comma intensify the accusation?

121-122. **Never admitting counsel o' the war.** "Never accepting any advice from me, his fellow-general." Does this charge prove him a traitor?

129. **No more.** That is, no better than a boy of tears.

133. **The first time.** Is he correct?

136. **Notion.** Understanding, consciousness.

154. **Presently.** Immediately.

158. **Folds-in.** Extends beyond and around.

160. **Judicious.** Judicial, impartial.

178. **Owe you.** Had in store for you.

185. **Herald.** In Elizabethan, not in Roman days, did heralds accompany funerals of nobles, and proclaim the rank of the deceased.



## SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

### ACT I.

1. Why does the play open with a scene presenting common people?
2. What is the plebeians' opinion of Coriolanus?
3. What is their attitude toward the patricians as a class?
4. What is the dramatic purpose of having some of the people speak in defence of Coriolanus?
5. What opinion of Menenius is held by the citizens?
6. What application does he make of the fable of *The Belly and the Members*?
7. Are the citizens convinced by the arguments of Menenius? What is the latter's real opinion of them?
8. Mention some of the reasons which Coriolanus gives at his first appearance for his lack of sympathy with the plebeians.
9. What is foreshadowed by his complaints about the leniency of the patricians?
10. Why does he welcome the news that the Volscians are making war on Rome?
11. What is indicated by the willingness of Coriolanus to serve under Cominius? Are the tribunes correct in the reason they assign for it?

12. Is Coriolanus really patriotic?
13. What is the comment on Marcius made by the tribunes after his withdrawal?
14. What is the dramatic purpose of Scene ii?
15. How is Volumnia portrayed in the third scene as the typical Roman mother?
16. What are the important characteristics brought out in the personality of Virgilia?
17. Which of the two women wields the stronger influence over Coriolanus? Why?
18. Is the condemnation of the common people by Coriolanus in Scene iv excusable on any ground?
19. In what ways does the dramatist arouse our admiration for the hero in this scene?
20. How is this admiration increased by the incidents of Scene v?
21. Were the common soldiers to be blamed for collecting spoil?
22. What difference do you note between the attitude of Cominius towards his defeated soldiers and that of Coriolanus towards his?
23. What is the effect gained by Scene vii? Could this scene be omitted in a presentation of the play?
24. Comment on the realism of Scene viii. Does this boasting of the two antagonists add to or detract from our interest in them?
25. How does Coriolanus receive the honors heaped upon him? Is his modesty real or feigned?
26. What is the dramatic purpose of introducing the

incident of the prisoner whose release is requested by Coriolanus? Is the latter really magnanimous or does he merely wish to appear to be so?

27. How does Cominius impress us as a true nobleman?

28. What terms are granted to Corioli?

29. What is the attitude of Aufidius towards Coriolanus as revealed in Scene x? What action is foreshadowed by the former's words?

30. What title might be given to this act?

## ACT II.

1. What object does Menenius have in mind in his conversation with the tribunes? Does he accomplish it?

2. Are the accusations of the tribunes against Coriolanus just?

3. Which is the better representative of the patrician order, Menenius or Coriolanus? Why?

4. What is the effect on Menenius of Brutus's hint that the former is not taken seriously even by the patricians?

5. What is the purpose of the scene between him and the women?

6. Contrast the welcome which Coriolanus receives from his mother with that which he receives from his wife. Which is the more sincere?

7. Discuss the hero's courtesy to women.

8. What is indicated by the fact that Coriolanus first desires to visit the patricians at the Capitol? Is he disdainful of any honors which might proceed from the common people? Is his mother?

9. Does Brutus show any sympathy with the commoners in his speech, Scene i, ll. 239-257? In what spirit does he describe the crowd?

10. Which of the two tribunes shows the keener understanding of the effect that the present popularity of Coriolanus will have on his future? Explain.

11. What do the tribunes fear from the probable elevation of Coriolanus to the consulship? What plans do they formulate to defeat him?

12. What is the dramatic purpose of the conversation between the two officers in Scene ii? Why are they not given names by Shakespeare?

13. What had Coriolanus said about the manner of canvassing for the consulship? Has his attitude undergone any change?

14. Which of the two patricians, Menenius or Cominius, proves more helpful in presenting Coriolanus's cause to the people? Give reasons.

15. Show how Brutus provokes Coriolanus to disclose his real self before the Senators. To what does he particularly object?

16. How does the reasoning of the citizens at the beginning of Scene iii contrast with that of the tribunes? How does this prepare for the public appearance of Coriolanus?

17. What are Coriolanus's real feelings towards the people as shown here? Does he hesitate to show his wounds because of real modesty or because of his personal contempt for the people?

18. Show how the three scenes of petitioning are differentiated.

19. How are the plebeians persuaded to withdraw the promises they have given? Are we led to approve of or to condemn their action?

20. What was the Roman method of voting at this time?

21. In what requisite for true statesmanship has Coriolanus shown himself lacking? Explain.

22. How do the closing speeches of this act prepare for future action?

### ACT III.

1. What is the dramatic purpose of mentioning the preparations for war by the Volscians?

2. Is there any indication that Coriolanus is more incensed at the tribunes than at the people?

3. What justification for the action of the tribunes can you find?

4. How is the brawl fomented?

5. Are the criticisms made in this act by Coriolanus against the actions of the people justified?

6. Show how and why Coriolanus turns against his fellow patricians. Do any of them ever utter a word of criticism of him?

7. What does he say concerning the free distribution of corn?

8. Are the tribunes right when they say that he has spoken like a traitor and should suffer accordingly?

9. What is the result of Menenius's attempts at mediation?

10. In view of what happens in this scene, show how the tribunes had shown a keen knowledge of the hero's character.

11. Does Volumnia give her son sound and sage advice? Is her real attitude towards the plebeians different from his?

12. Which shows itself more admirable, the mother who would temporize to gain an end, or the son who has no sympathy for the people and defiantly boasts of it?

13. Was Coriolanus right in yielding to his mother's wishes against his own convictions? Does this submission presage success?

14. What future action is prepared for by the second scene of this act?

15. Show how Sicinius prepares for the reappearance of Coriolanus.

16. What is the climax of the play?

17. What is the dramatic purpose of the false accusations against the hero?

18. Was there any consideration in the sentence passed upon him? What does this show concerning the real temper of the people?



19. With what feeling are we left at the end of this act as to the future of Rome?

20. What is the effect of the final speech of Coriolanus, particularly of the last two lines of it?

## ACT IV.

1. How does Coriolanus accept his defeat? Does he retain our sympathy?

2. Does Volumnia curse the commoners because of her love for her son or because of her blighted hopes?

3. What is accomplished by having Coriolanus go into exile unaccompanied by any of the friends who wish to share it with him?

4. What fears of the wisdom of their course come upon the tribunes in the second scene?

5. How does this scene present Volumnia? To what do the tribunes attribute her angry taunts?

6. Is the action advanced by Scene iii? Could it be omitted or combined with any other scene?

7. What purpose does Coriolanus reveal in his soliloquy at the end of the fourth scene of this act? Why is this purpose made known here? What do you think of his train of reasoning?

8. Discuss the humor of the fifth scene.

9. What contrast appears here between the nobility of the two leading characters, Coriolanus and Aufidius?

10. What injustice does Coriolanus do to the nobles of Rome in his account of his wrongs?

11. Is it credible that the Volscian soldiers should

admire him, if the citizens of his native city hate him enough to banish him?

12. Point out the humor in the servants' talk which follows the meeting of the two leaders. Does their chatter bear out Coriolanus's opinion of the common people?

13. What truth and irony do you find in the speech of Sicinius at the opening of Scene vi?

14. Discuss the mood and thought of old Menenius in this scene. Does he misunderstand Coriolanus?

15. What is the effect upon the nobles when the news reaches Rome that the Volscians are again approaching?

16. What is the effect upon the tribunes and the citizens? Are we led to expect such conduct from them? Explain.

17. What complaint does Aufidius make against Coriolanus? Is it a just one?

18. What two main purposes did the dramatist have in Scene vii?

#### ACT V.

1. On what grounds had Cominius appealed to Coriolanus to spare Rome? What was the reply of Coriolanus to each appeal?

2. Why does Menenius feel that he can succeed where Cominius failed? What is his plan?

3. How do the Volscians receive him? How does Coriolanus treat him? What sign of yielding does Coriolanus show?

4. Was Coriolanus influenced in his actions towards these men by his promises to Aufidius? Would he have done what he did if he had feared treachery on the part of Aufidius?

5. How is he affected by the appearance of his wife and mother?

6. Outline Volumnia's appeal.

7. Does Coriolanus regain our admiration by yielding to her plea? What does he surrender by his yielding?

8. What purpose do the comments of Menenius in Scene iv serve?

9. What cover has Aufidius for his jealous perfidy?

10. What trait is exhibited in Coriolanus's resentment at Aufidius's insult implied in the word, Boy?



## TOPICS FOR THEMES

1. Coriolanus as a Military Leader.
2. Volumnia as a Type of the Roman Mother.
3. Coriolanus as a Statesman.
4. The Plot of the Tribunes against Coriolanus.
5. The Fickleness of the Roman Populace.
6. The Various Embassies to Coriolanus.
7. Volumnia and Virgilia: a Contrast.
8. Coriolanus and Aufidius: a Contrast.
9. The Humor of the Play.
10. The Play as a Commentary on Democracy.
11. Menenius.
12. The Underlying Philosophy of the Play.
13. The Attitude of the Plebeians towards Coriolanus at Various Times.
14. The Influence of Volumnia over her Son.
15. The Terror in Rome at the Approach of the Volscian Army.
16. The Perfidy of Aufidius.
17. A Comparison of Plutarch's Version with that of Shakespeare.
18. The Political Situation in Rome at the Opening of the Play.

19. Roman Ideals.
20. The Failure of Coriolanus's Canvassing for the Consulship.
21. The Ingratitude of Republics.
22. The Most Dramatic Scene in the Play.
23. The Structure of the Play.
24. *Coriolanus* as a "Star" Play.
25. A Comparison of *Coriolanus* with *Julius Cæsar*.









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